STAY TUNED

FINAL SHOOTING SCRIPT

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Story by

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1 VIDEO INSERT - THE HAIR CLUB FOR MEN *

IN BLACK:

TV ANNOUNCER (V.O.) *

SMASH CUT TO:

2 INT. KNABLE DEN 2

EXTREME CLOSE UP of a HAND holding a TV remote controller, the TV's glow the only source of light. The thumb hits the channel button and we HEAR more snippets from late-night TV shows...

...as the CAMERA MOVES around the dimly-lit room, taking in empty bags of corn chips, twinkie wrappers, a couple of empty Bud cans, a dog-eared TV Guide...a framed family photo, a dusty fencing trophy...and a couple of crossed foils on the wall.

This is a man's den. A womb-like, private sanctuary designed to shut out the failures and hassles of the day.

FROM THE TV (O.S.)
Herman's House of Tile, where you'll find miles of aisles of tiles--
(--zap--)
...success comes pouring your way at...the Academy of Bartending!
(--zap--)
...professor! Look at the size of those footprints!

CAMERA comes to rest on ROY KNABLE'S face, staring at the screen. Early 40's. His ambitious hopes and dreams of youth have slipped away. Some people use alcohol to blot out their failures. Roy medicates himself with TV. In massive doses.

3 EXT. SUBURBAN NEIGHBORHOOD STREET - NIGHT 3

The dead of night. A TALL, KNIFE-LIKE, MYSTERIOUS FIGURE emerges from the darkness, eerily whistling "Whistle While You Work." His step is methodical, predatory.

4 INT. ANOTHER HOUSE - SAME TIME 4

MRS. SEIDENBAUM, a beast in tent dress and hair curlers, watches

5 VIDEO INSERT - JOHNNY CARSON SHOW (STOCK) 5

6 INT. SEIDENBAUM HOUSE 6

Her husband MURRAY -- short, fat, and henpecked -- brings in a huge bowl of popcorn, which she grabs, samples and shoves back to him.

MRS. SEIDENBAUM
Needs more butter.

Browbeaten, Murray mumbles a "yes dear" and takes the bowl back into the kitchen.

7 EXT. SUBURBAN NEIGHBORHOOD STREET - NIGHT 7

The whistling mysterious FIGURE stops in front of a house. The LUMINOUS GLOW from a TV filters through the front window.

We supernaturally ZOOM to the HOUSE'S FRONT DOOR. A long finger stabs the doorbell. We see the nameplate: "The Seidenbaums."

MRS. SEIDENBAUM (O.S.)
Murray! Get the door!

Murray cracks the door. The mysterious man is seen from behind.

MYSTERIOUS MAN
Sorry to disturb you at this hour, Mr. Seidenbaum. But you've been personally selected to receive a <u>most</u> irresistible offer...

8 INT. ROY'S DEN - NIGHT 8

As Roy is drifting into sleep he presses the remote and we HEAR LIVELY THEME MUSIC from an Errol Flynn swashbuckler. Suddenly Roy is alive again. He sits up, involved in the action.

9 VIDEO INSERT - ERROL FLYNN MOVIE (STOCK) 9

FLYNN
(in movie)
At last we meet Marquez...

ROY
(in unison)
...sword to sword. Prepare to taste Corsican steel!

Flynn has a furious swordfight.

10 INT. ROY'S DEN 10

Roy grabs a foil from the wall and fights along. He has the moves down, but they are rusty. HELEN, his attractive wife, comes to the door. She picks up an empty bag of cheese puffs from the floor, sighing, annoyed.

HELEN
It's late, Roy.

ROY
(absorbed in the movie)
Be up in a minute, honey.

HELEN
I'm thinking of renting out your side of the bed.

He's not listening. Spurned again in favor of his electronic mistress, she exits.

Duplicating one of Flynn's moves, Roy swishes his sword, breaking a lamp. Hoping his wife didn't hear this...

ROY
Uh, coming honey! Coming...

11 INT. SECOND FLOOR - NIGHT 11

He trudges up the stairs and stops at a partially open bedroom door, knocks and opens it.

12 INT. DARRYL'S ROOM - NIGHT 12

DARRYL KNABLE, a bright, bespectacled 13-year-old works amid a confusion of cables, PC boards, amps and video equipment.

ROY
Lights out, Marconi.

DARRYL
10-4, dad.

Roy smiles, remembering when he, too, had such enthusiasm.

13 INT. SECOND FLOOR HALLWAY - NIGHT 13

Roy passes his daughter's bedroom door...behind it we can HEAR someone talking. Roy gives a gentle rap.

ROY
Can we keep the phone bill under the national debt?

14 INT. ROY & HELEN'S BEDROOM - NIGHT 14

CLOSE ON an antique MUSIC BOX on the dresser. We hear delicate MUSIC BOX MUSIC OVER. PULL BACK to show many more boxes of various shapes and sizes on the dresser and bookcase shelves.

Helen lies in bed, holding the music box the music is coming from. A tiny ballerina turns as the music plays. Roy enters, she quickly shuts the music box and lays it on her nightstand. Roy climbs into bed. Helen is on her side, her back to him. Beat.

HELEN
We have to talk, Roy. *

We hear rustling from his side of bed. We see Roy flicking on * the bedroom TV to the swashbuckler movie. *

15 VIDEO INSERT - ERROL FLYNN MOVIE (STOCK)

16 INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT 16

ROY
(eyes glued to TV)
Moonpie? *

HELEN
(hesitantly)
.....Yes? *

ROY
(a beat)
Is that yes you want a Moonpie? *

HELEN
You see, that's what I mean... *
I thought you were being lovey-dovey. *
I thought you meant "Moonpie" like *
"Honeybunch" or "Sweetheart". I wasn't *
thrilled with "Moonpie" but it was a *
start. Now I see you were offering me *
a Moonpie. Goodnight, Roy. *

ROY
(a beat)
...Do you <u>want</u> me to call you *
Moonpie?

Helen turns away from him. He looks at her, sighs, watches * TV.

17 EXT. SEIDENBAUM'S BACKYARD - NIGHT 17

Mrs. Seidenbaum, at the back door, looks O.S. into the backyard.

MRS. SEIDENBAUM
Murray, what're you doing back there?

She walks out into the yard, CAMERA on her TIGHT.

MRS. SEIDENBAUM
Murray...?

She continues out of frame. There's a STRANGE HIGH-PITCHED HUM. She SCREAMS. Suddenly an intense WIND kicks up and a BRIGHT LIGHT flashes...then all is silent. A dog barks in the distance...and the Seidenbaum's open back door creaks in the breeze.

18 EXT. KNABLE HOUSE BACK YARD - NEXT MORNING 18

OPEN ON a jerry-built TV transmission tower on roof of garage. We FOLLOW cable from the transmitter, over the yard, to the house, where it leads into Darryl's bedroom.

19 INT. DARRYL'S BEDROOM - DAY 19

The wire leads to Darryl's Rube Goldberg-esque jumble of electronic equipment. He flips some switches.

20 VIDEO INSERT - TOM & JERRY CARTOON (STOCK) 20

21 INT. ROY'S BATHROOM - DAY (WIDEN ANGLE) 21

to show the small Sony is on the counter in the Knable bathroom. Roy watches as he shaves. He yawns, hungover from late-night TV watching.

22 INT. DIANE'S ROOM - DAY 22

DIANE KNABLE, an attractive, slightly ditzy 16-year-old, is dressing for school, watching

23 VIDEO INSERT - MTV ROCK VIDEO (STOCK) 23

an MTV rock video on her TV.

24 INT. DARRYL'S ROOM - DAY 24

Darryl flips the last switch. The needle marked on the dial marked TRANSMISSION POWER jumps. He talks to the video camera.

DARRYL
We interrupt this broadcast--

Darryl's static-filled image flickers on and off on his TV...

25 INT. BATHROOM - DAY 25

...and likewise, comes on the TV in the bathroom, intruding into the cartoon. Roy frowns, sees his son, then smiles.

DARRYL
(on TV)
--to bring you this special report.

26 INT. ROY & HELEN'S BEDROOM - DAY 26

Helen is doing aerobic side-bends to an exercise show. Darryl's transmission breaks in.

DARRYL
(on TV)
Young electronics genius Darryl Knable--

27 INT. DIANE'S ROOM - DAY 27

Darryl's image breaks into the MTV rock video.

DARRYL
(on TV)
--has just won the Nobel Prize.

DIANE
You dipstick! *

28 INT. DARRYL'S ROOM - DAY 28

DARRYL
For autographs, send $3 to Darryl Knab--

Darryl's equipment sparks and dies. His TV image vanishes. He groans. Failed again.

29 INT. KITCHEN - DAY 29

Darryl enters, looking at the burnt-up circuit board. He sighs deeply and consigns it to the trash. Diane is on the phone.

DIANE
No, I can talk...no one but my lame-o brother...yeah, I totally liked being with you, too...but...
(low, embarrassed, touches collar)
you left a mark.

DARRYL
It's called a hickey, Diane.

Diane shoots Darryl a hard look as Helen, a bundle of nervous energy, rushes in wearing an Evan-Picone business suit and white silk blouse. She blows on her freshly done nails while securing her leather watchband. Diane hangs up. *

DIANE
Def outfit, mom. But undo another button.
(off Helen's dubious look)
Go for it.

Shrugging, Helen unbuttons it, revealing a daring (for her) neckline.

DIANE
See? You can still be sexy at your age.

Helen throws her a "gee thanks" look. From the cupboard she brings out four bowls, each with an exact measure of cereal. Diane trades "mom's gone off the edge" looks with Darryl.

(CONTINUED)

29 CONTINUED: 29

HELEN
I measured the cereal last night. It saves time in the morning.

Roy rambles in. Helen turns, smoothing her skirt, half-hoping Roy will notice her new outfit. But he just grumbles "morning" and opens and stares into the fridge. A little miffed at being ignored, Helen reaches around him for the non-fat milk.

HELEN
What are you looking for?

ROY
Cholesterol.

HELEN
You know what your doctor said--

ROY
My doctor's had three bypasses. What's he know about health?

Roy sits at the table, glumly looking at the bowl of cereal.

HELEN
It's high in fiber. It's good for you.

ROY
Yeah, if you're a termite.

The kids laugh. Roy eats a spoonful, crunching loudly.

ROY (cont'd)
You know, actually... this would make good landfill.

HELEN
(with an edge)
You'll be landfill if you don't start exercising and eating right.

ROY
(snaps open sports section, grumbles)
Nice way to start off the day. With the Voice of Doom ringing in my ear.

Roy and Helen trade looks. Before this escalates into a fight, Diane steps in to stop it.

DIANE
We should all become vegetarians. It's morally wrong to eat things that think.

(CONTINUED)

29 CONTINUED: (2) 29

DARRYL
Then it'd be okay to put you on a spit.

The siblings trade scowls.

ROY
Hey sport, I liked your broadcast this morning. Keep it up and someday you'll have your own show.

DIANE
Yeah, like America's most totally geeked-out videos.

As a CAR HORN sounds outside.

HELEN
My ride.

She springs up, grabs her briefcase. As part of their automatic ritual, Helen mechanically bends for a kiss. Roy gives her a bland peck, scowling at her revealing neckline.

ROY
Honey--hey, button up there. Jeeze.

Without thinking, she buttons it. Then, as Roy reburies his head in the sports pages, she angrily turns and stalks out...

30 EXT. KNABLE HOUSE - DAY 30

...and down the front walk to a Mercedes idling at the curb. In defiance, she undoes the button before she gets in.

31 INT. MERCEDES - DAY 31

STEVE, a handsome, well-dressed and well-built thirtyish man is at the wheel. She gets in, they ad lib "mornings." The car's not moving, Helen looks to see Steve ogling her.

STEVE
Very sexy.

HELEN
(under her breath)
Glad someone thinks so.
(notices he's still ogling)
Drive, Steve.

32 INT. KNABLE KITCHEN - DAY 32

Roy peers out the window as the car pulls away. Embers of jealousy smolder.

(CONTINUED)

32 CONTINUED: 32

DARRYL
Is she gone?

ROY
(pondering: from the marriage?)
Probably.

Darryl and Diane trade looks, surmising what Roy means. To cheer him up, Darryl produces a carton of donuts from the cupboard.

DARRYL
Here dad, have a donut.

Roy smiles at Darryl, takes a donut. Diane kisses her father on the cheek.

DIANE
Bye dad. Love ya.

Diane bounces out. Roy gazes out the window, bites on the donut.

33 EXT. KNABLE HOUSE - DRIVEWAY - DAY 33

Roy walks to his car, lugging his 40 pound salesman's sample case. The contents of the case noisily shift around, sounding like loose pieces of pipe.

The nextdoor neighbor, SACKLER, is walking his enormous, black dog, "RIVETS."

SACKLER
Hey, Knable. Your kid's messing up my TV reception again!

ROY
Y'know Sackler, every day you and your dog look more alike. My condolences to the dog.

Rivets jumps up, resting his front paws on the car's open passenger side window, BARKING. Roy backs out.

SACKLER
I'm gonna call the FCC, I tell ya. The FCC!

34 EXT. BROWNELL PLUMBING SUPPLIES OFFICE - DAY 34

Roy's employer. Very unglamorous. Linoleum floors and government surplus desks.

(CONTINUED)

34 CONTINUED: 34

As Roy enters, we see there is a celebration going on. HENDERSON, a very youthful looking salesman is being congratulated by other SALESMEN. Roy talks to RUNBECK, a tired-looking salesman in his fifties.

ROY
What's up? Henderson got a date for the prom?

RUNBECK
He's our new regional manager.

ROY
(his mouth drops)
What?? He's only been here a year.

RUNBECK
(philosophically)
Youth must be served. Excuse me while I go shoot myself.

Roy's boss, the SALES MANAGER, pokes his head out of his office, points to Roy, beckoning him in.

35 INT. SALES MANAGER'S OFFICE - DAY 35

Chewing on a cigar, the manager looks over a computer printout. Roy sits in a chair, waiting to be bawled out. On a display board behind the manager's desk are the company's PLUMBING FIXTURES -- FAUCETS, NOZZLES, SHOWER HEADS, etc. *

SALES MANAGER *
Piss poor, Knable. Since June -- six months in a row you're <u>way</u> below quota. *

ROY
I'm in a little slump, that's all.

SALES MANAGER
Ballplayers get in slumps. Not my salesmen.
(leans forward, stabs with cigar)
And I won't have losers on my team.

Roy should bristle at this remark--but he lets it go. *

SALES MANAGER (cont'd)
I expect a hundred percent from you, Knable. Remember: Conceive. Believe. Achieve. Got that? * * *

(CONTINUED)

35 CONTINUED: 35

ROY
(with false enthusiasm)
Got it.

SALES MANAGER
Damnit, then go out there and show some passion for plumbing supplies. A job is like a beautiful woman. Take her for granted...and she's gone.

36 INT. LOBBY OF OFFICE BUILDING - DAY 36

MOS MONTAGE of Roy on the job, accompanied by blues MUSIC. Roy walks into the lobby of a time-worn building. He finds the building directory, runs his finger over the names until he spots Adams and Sons, Suite 800. He walks to the elevator. SIGN reads "OUT OF ORDER." Roy groans.

37 INT. OFFICE BUILDING STAIRWELL - DAY 37

Roy climbs the stairs, lugging the sample case, sweating, grumbling.

38 INT. OFFICE - DAY 38

Roy is trying to sell to a stone-faced BUYER in a glassed-in cubicle. Roy has his sample case open, which is full of faucets, spigots and shower heads. Roy shows him a faucet, the buyer shakes no. Roy shows him another, the buyer shakes no.

39 INT. ANOTHER OFFICE - DAY 39

At a buyer's desk. Roy flicks the latch on his sample case and it falls open, knocking a cup of hot coffee into the BUYER'S lap. The guy stands, yelling at Roy. Roy wearily latches up his sample case and walks off, knowing he won't make a sale here.

39A INT. ROY'S DEN - NIGHT 39A

Roy plops himself into his chair. Flicks on the TV. Ahhh, sanctuary.

39B VIDEO PLAYBACK - SWEET AND LOW COMMERCIAL 39B*

40 INT. WAREHOUSE - DAY 40

Roy is trying to get the attention of a busy BUSINESSMAN who is barking orders to his WAREHOUSEMEN. Roy sets his sample case on a pallet and doesn't see a forklift take the pallet away, along with his case. Roy finally gets the attention of the businessman, reaches for his case and finds it gone. He sighs.

40A INT. ROY'S & HELEN'S BEDROOM - NIGHT 40A

Helen lies in bed alone, briefcase opened next to her, doing some work. She looks at the clock. It says 1:30 AM.

40B INT. ROY'S DEN - NIGHT (VIDEO INSERT - SUNDAY COMICS) 40B *

Roy munches Cheeze Puffs and laughs, watching Sunday Comics. *

41 EXT. CITY STREET - DAY 41

Roy gets out of his car parked at the curb. As he swings his sample bag out of the car, the handle breaks and the bag flies out into the traffic... and a truck runs over it. END MUSIC.

42 INT. MALL - DAY 42.

Two salesmen, RUNBECK and GANZ are having lunch. Roy is in the background getting food. Ganz is reading "MONEY" magazine.

RUNBECK
I can't believe that Henderson... what's he - 20? 21?

GANZ
Says here that Ted Turner sticks his head into a bucket of ice water every morning. It tightens the skin.

RUNBECK
You know how I've busted my hump for that promotion?

GANZ
He looks good too. Don't you think he looks good?

RUNBECK
Stunning. Where's Roy?

GANZ
Over there. I use teabags... every night... right around my eyes and mouth.

RUNBECK
(looks over at Roy)
I don't get him. Every year he gets passed over, and it's like he couldn't care less.

GANZ
(looking at Runbeck's lunch)
What's that, a tortilla?

(CONTINUED)

42 CONTINUED 42 *

RUNBECK
It's an enchilada.

GANZ
Looks like a tortilla.

RUNBECK
Well, it's not a tortilla, it's an enchilada!

GANZ
Why are you yelling?

RUNBECK
I'm 49 years old, goddammit! I think I would know the difference between a tortilla and an enchilada!

Roy sits down with a tray of food.

ROY
(to Ganz)
What's with him?

GANZ
Runbeck thinks you're enchanted.

ROY
(to Runbeck)
How's that burrito?

RUNBECK
IT'S NOT A BURRITO! It's like talking to an oar lock.

ROY
(looking at Ganz's lunch)
What's that?

GANZ
I don't know. My wife made it for me. It's got no fat, no salt, no cholestrol, and no chemicals. It goes great with nothing.

RUNBECK
You were first in line, Knable. That promotion should have been yours! So how come I'm about to have an aneurism and you're sitting there smiling like you're on valium?

(CONTINUED)

42 CONTINUED 42 *

ROY
Know what my father used to tell me?

RUNBECK
Oh, Jesus, Andy Griffith is among us.

ROY
He said "Roy, be a duck".

GANZ
A duck.

ROY
Stay calm on the surface, but keep paddling like hell underneath.

RUNBECK
Are you gonna sit there and tell me you're paddling like hell underneath?
(to Ganz)
He thinks he's paddling like hell underneath?

Roy takes a bite off Runbeck's plate.

GANZ
He didn't say he was paddling like hell underneath... he said his father said that he should paddle like hell underneath.

RUNBECK
(to Roy)
You're not paddling like hell underneath... you're treading water. What the hell's the matter with you? Don't you have dreams?

Roy looks at him.

ROY
Yeah. I have dreams. You know what I wanted to be... I forgot. It just didn't work out the way I planned. Did you ever see my boat, Runbeck?

RUNBECK
You don't have a boat.

(CONTINUED)

42 CONTINUED 42 *

ROY
Yes I do. It's in my daughter's mouth. Four thousand dollars of orthodontia. I named the boat "Roy's Reverie". Did you ever see my pool table? It's in my son's room. It looks very much like new carpeting, but it's my brand new pool table. (PAUSE) You think I always wanted to carry around 50 pounds of pipe nipples? Just when I wanted to change jobs, my wife wanted to go back to school. So, I stayed ... and she's got an M.B.A. I kept the sample cases, and she's got an office. An office of her own. With a door. A door with her name on it. A door that opens and closes. And a window. A real window. One you can see through. (PAUSE) It just didn't work out like I planned. Come over some night for dinner. I'll show you my dreams. They're all over the place.
(He looks at the tortilla)
You gonna eat that?

43 INT. CONFERENCE ROOM - DAY 43

In contrast to Roy's work environment, Helen's office is quiet, designer-decorated. Coffee is sipped from china, not styrofoam.

Helen is finishing a presentation to upper management.

HELEN
...and with a nineteen point two-five increase over projections, we recommend the second-stage roll-out of our "Amazing Mutant" pre teen vitamin line. Thank you.

The people around the table APPLAUD. The PRESIDENT stands.

PRESIDENT
Fine work, Ms. Knable. I know the board will have no qualms agreeing with your recommendations.

The big wigs exit, pausing to shake Helen's hand, offering congratulations. She is clearly flushed with excitement over her success. Steve is last to congratulate her. They are alone.

HELEN
We did it!

STEVE
You did it. You're terrific.
(encloses her hand with his)
How 'bout we have dinner tonight?

They lock eyes. Something definitely brewing here.

STEVE (cont'd)
I know a nice little place. Very private. Someplace where we can celebrate.

HELEN
(withdraws her hand)
That's what I plan to do. Celebrate. At home. With my husband.

44 INT. ROY'S DEN - NIGHT 44

On the screen is

45 VIDEO INSERT - "MALTESE FALCON" (STOCK) 45

a scene from "The Maltese Falcon." Bogart talks tough with Mary Astor...

BOGART (ON TV)
...I won't walk in Thursby's--and I don't know how many others--footsteps.

46 INT. DEN - NIGHT 46

Roy, TV tray in front of him, watches, rapt, a participant in this make-believe world.

ROY
(along with Bogie)
You killed Miles and you're going over for it.

Roy sneers, tough-guy like. If only his mundane life had such drama. Helen enters, eager to tell Roy about her success.

HELEN
Roy, my presentation went great.

ROY
That's great!! *

Roy rises and gives her a hug, but his eyes remain glued on the TV screen. *

HELEN
The president was very impressed! *
Are you proud of me? *

ROY
(not really listening)
Very proud! You killed Miles *
and you're going over for it! *

He sits back down, riveted to the TV set. Helen just stands, not knowing whether to cry or just remain astonished. *

47 INT. KITCHEN - NIGHT 47

Helen stands at the counter, angrily crunching handfuls of the high-fiber cereal straight from the box, glowering.

Darryl and Diane enter, carrying backpacks, leaving for the night.

HELEN
Where're you two going?

(CONTINUED)

47 CONTINUED: 47

DIANE
Mom, remember?

HELEN
Oh yeah, you're spending the night at friends. Right.

A CAR HORN sounds outside. Diane starts out.

HELEN
Diane. No boys. You go directly to Tracy's.

DIANE
Mother, I'm not a child.

Diane exits. Darryl pauses, something weighing on his mind.

DARRYL
You know my friend Billy Steffins?

HELEN
Uh-huh.

DARRYL
His dad moved out for a while. Then his dad and mom went away and sat in a hot tub all weekend -- and when they came back, Billy's dad moved back in and things were all better.

HELEN
Is that why you two planned this? So your dad and I could be alone?

He shrugs a "yes." She gives him a hug and kiss.

HELEN (cont'd)
I love you. And so does your dad.

DARRYL
Okay, don't get yucky about it. See ya.

48 INT. KNABLE DINING ROOM - NIGHT 48

Helen is reading through some work papers, sipping a glass of wine. She stops, thinks, makes a decision, heads toward the den.

49 VIDEO INSERT - BASKETBALL GAME 49 *

50 INT. ROY'S DEN - SAME TIME

Roy is absorbed in a basketball game. Helen enters.

ROY
Take it to the high post. The high post. The high post!

HELEN
Roy.

ROY
Hi, post, uh...Helen.

HELEN
Roy, I've got an idea!

ROY
Great! Congratulations! Did I tell you how proud I am of you! Pass it, pass it!!

Helen stands in front of the set.

HELEN
I think we should go away.

ROY
OK honey, you go ahead, I'll be there in three minutes and forty-five seconds.

HELEN
Roy, now listen to me. I thank that you and I should take some time and go up to the mountains. Like we used to. Just the two of us * No kids, no phones...

ROY
(trying not to look obvious while he attempts to look past her)
Yeah, yeah, good, good.

HELEN
And no TV.

ROY
No TV?

(CONTINUED)

50 CONTINUED

HELEN
There's no TV there.

ROY
...Is there a plug?

HELEN
You shut yourself off in here every night.

ROY
It's not like I'm drinking or gambling in here. You make it sound as if I have some kind of problem. Could you turn that light off?

HELEN
You're shutting yourself off from everything... and everybody.

She moves from in front of the TV just long enough for Roy to see his team score a basket.

ROY
(to himself)
Yes!!

HELEN
Are you having trouble at work? *

ROY
Of course not! What makes you say that? * *

HELEN
You talk in your sleep. *

ROY
I do not! *

HELEN
Who is "that little pigeon turd Henderson"? * *

(CONTINUED)

50 CONTINUED 50

ROY
Oh, he's just some guy who was up for a promotion. I don't think he's got a chance in hell. I feel sorry for him, that's why I talk about him I guess. He doesn't have my...passion for plumbing supplies. It's sad really. Shoot it !, you idiot shoot it. * *

Helen turns off the TV. Roy gasps.

HELEN
Roy, the one thing we promised we'd always do... is be honest with each other.

ROY
Honey, we are honest with each other. There's less than a minute left, the score is tied...

HELEN
Roy...

ROY
Look, you say I'm shut off, I don't open up to you, I'm closed up. OK, I'm gonna tell you something very important. And honest. AndI don't want you to take it the wrong way.

HELEN
(astonished and with great sensitivity)
Of course Roy... I'll listen... Talk to me.

ROY
(seriously)
We're in double overtime here...

HELEN
(explodes)
That's it! Go ahead, watch TV!

ROY
(gratefully, like they've actually had a breakthrough)
Thanks, sweetie.

HELEN
This is communication??

(CONTINUED)

ROY
You wanna move a little to the -

HELEN
You know something? When I married you, you were a doer. Now all you are is a watcher! I thought I could get you back! I actually thought, "Don't worry Helen, he'll come back! You'll get your husband back!!"
(regarding remote)
Give me that thing!

She grabs it from him and goes to the door.

ROY
Well, if there's something you wanna watch--

HELEN
I'm through watching and I'm through waiting! You hear me, Roy?? I'm through!!

She throws the remote at the television. It hits the set and harmlessly bounces off. Roy runs over and inspects it. It is unbroken. He breathes a sigh of relief and sits back down on the couch. Helen has been watching all of this. She calmly walks over to the mantel, picks up his fencing trophy and hurls it at the television set. The set explodes in a shower of sparks. Roy stares at the mortally wounded appliance as if his child has been killed.

CUT TO:

50 CONTINUED: (3) 50

ROY
My TV!

Angry, on the verge of tears, Helen runs out the front door. The door slams, she's gone. Roy looks back into the TV, his troubled face reflected in the fractured screen.

51 VIDEO INSERT - ROMANTIC MOVIES (STOCK) 51

CLOSE ON the small SONY on top of the broken TV. A romantic old movie is ending, the lovers professing their undying love...

FROM THE TV
...and we'll love each other for ever and ever...

52 INT. ROY'S DEN - NIGHT 52

ROY
Never happen.

Roy flips through MORE ROMANTIC MOVIES with protestations of endless love. Frustrated, Roy finally gets the news.

53 VIDEO INSERT - INT. NEWSROOM 53

On TV behind the NEWSCASTER is a photo of the Seidenbaums.

NEWSCASTER
--sudden, unexplained disappearance of Murray and Sara Seidenbaum of Oakview. Police are still baffled by the case--

54 INT. ROY'S DEN - NIGHT 54

The name "Seidenbaum" is vaguely familiar. Roy watches, intent...

55 EXT. KNABLE STREET - NIGHT 55

The MYSTERIOUS MAN walks down the sidewalk whistling "Whistle While You Work." He stops at the mail box that reads "THE KNABLES." The light from the TV is seen through the window.

MYSTERIOUS MAN
Roy... your boring little life is about to get horribly exciting.

56 INT. ROY'S DEN - NIGHT 56

Roy hears the DOORBELL, gets up.

57 INT. KNABLE FRONT DOOR - NIGHT 57

Roy opens the door a crack. We see the dark silhouette of the mysterious man... but not his face.

ROY
Who is it?

MYSTERIOUS MAN
Mr. Knable, sorry to disturb you at this hour. But you've been personally selected to receive a most irresistible offer.

ROY
(starts to shut door)
Look, I'm kinda busy right now--

MYSTERIOUS MAN
(a command)
Wait, Mr. Knable!

MR. SPIKE steps into the light. With his black, piercing eyes and magnetic, confident manner, his presence is overpowering. Roy stops.

SPIKE (cont'd)
I have something you want.
(darkly)
Escape. From all your failures and woes. At the touch of your thumb. On this...

Mr. Spike produces a black hand-held device. Futuristic, hi-tech, it could be some strange weapon, but actually it is a TV REMOTE CONTROLLER -- UNLIKE ANYTHING EVER SEEN.

When Spike hands it to Roy, it has a mysterious effect on him--as if it were the TV worshipper's Holy Grail, the object of ultimate desire.

SPIKE
Your new controller, Mr. Knable. Your passport to the ultimate television experience.

Spike enters without an invitation and strolls toward Roy's den. Roy looks up from the controller and follows...

57A VIDEO INSERT - SPORTSWRITERS 57A*

58 INT ROY'S DEN - NIGHT 58

Entering, Spike takes in the room, notices the crossed foils.

SPIKE
Ah! You fence!

(CONTINUED)

58 CONTINUED: 58

Spike takes a foil, whips it around expertly.

SPIKE (cont'd)
Ever... kill anyone?

ROY
Of course not. Look, Mister --

SPIKE
Spike. At your service.

A lightning-quick flick of the foil knocks the controller out of Roy's hand and it flies through the air into Spike's hand.

ROY
What exactly are you selling?

Spike picks up Helen's framed photo, eyes it for a beat.

SPIKE
Mmmm. Attractive. The little woman?

Roy nods. Spike sees the busted TV, his evil mind working.

SPIKE (cont'd)
Are you two having... difficulties?

ROY
I don't think that's any of your bus--

SPIKE
I know all about you, Roy. "Success" is that fly buzzing around your head, isn't it? You try to catch it--you grab--
(grabs at air)
but all you get is...
(opens empty hand)
nothing. You're tired of nothing, Roy. And you just want to hide from it all. In here. But she gives you heat, right? Heh, heh. Wait'll she sees THIS.
(thrusts the controller high like a fundamentalist preacher)
Six hundred and sixty-six channels of heart-pounding, skull-blasting entertainment! Comedy! Drama! Hot oil aerobics! Like nothing you've ever seen, brother!

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

58 CONTINUED: (2) 58

SPIKE (cont'd)
Unlimited excitement pulled from the ether and slammed into your new seventy-five inch, nine hundred line-res, 3-way expanded matrix Dolby TV!
(gestures to broken TV, softly)
Right here, Roy.

ROY
(eyes light up)
A new TV?

SPIKE
Straight from the temple of hi-tech. Make this thing look like a Philco.

Spike tosses the controller to Roy. Its cool, odd angles have a mesmerizing effect on him.

SPIKE (cont'd)
A lot of people would give their... souls for a system like that.

Roy looks at Spike. He feels a chill.

SPIKE (cont'd)
...figuratively speaking.

Spike whips out a thick contract and a pen, indicating...

SPIKE (cont'd)
Just sign here and we're in business.

Roy takes the contract. The heft of it is intimidating. He looks at Helen's picture... then hands back the contract.

ROY
No, I can't.

SPIKE
Very well. Goodnight, Mr. Knable.

Spike takes the controller, starts out. A thought hits...

SPIKE (cont'd)
There is... one thing. A free trial.

ROY
(interest perks up)
Free?

(CONTINUED)

58 CONTINUED: (3) 58

SPIKE
A simple handshake deal. We put it in tonight and if you don't... succumb to it within, say, 24 hours, I'll take it out. No obligation.
(as Roy mulls it over...)
Did I tell you that this system is so captivating--it's guaranteed to bring husbands and wives closer together?

Roy gazes at the controller. Something warns him not to make this deal--a warning he doesn't heed, as he shakes Spike's hand.

59 INT. APARTMENT - NIGHT 59

OPEN on Helen's friend, JUDY--a cynical woman in her late 40's who chain-smokes and wears flashy jewelry.

JUDY
Get out now while you still got your looks. I waited too long and now I'm stuck with men in plaid pants.

A NEW ANGLE reveals Helen, angrily pacing.

HELEN
When we got married, I couldn't walk by him without getting goosed. Now...

JUDY
My Harvey was the same way. Two hundred proof testosterone. Twenty years later, who do I got in bed with me? A balding lump with prostate problems.

Her anger subsiding, Helen slumps into a chair.

HELEN
On our first anniversary... he gave me a little music box. It was antique -- it cost hundreds of dollars -- way more than he could afford.

The MUSIC BOX is heard over this...

HELEN
(smiling at the memory)
And each anniversary after that he'd do the same thing. Sometimes it would take him weeks to find the right one. The house is now full of them.
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

59 CONTINUED: 59

HELEN (cont'd)
But every year he gave me another music box, I knew he still loved me.
(snaps out of it)
What did he give me this year? A vegetable steamer!

JUDY
(dryly)
Yeah, once they start giving you appliances, you know it's all over.
(gives Helen a business card)
Here's the guy who handled my divorce. A killer. Jaws with a briefcase. Roy won't know what hit him.

Helen looks at the card, the enormity of the situation suddenly hitting her. Noticing this, Judy's tone softens.

JUDY (cont'd)
Okay, listen. Maybe you're not ready to pull the plug just yet. But if you go back there tonight, you gotta lay it on the line.
(shakes her head dubiously)
Who knows, maybe that fight you had tonight woke him up.

HELEN
(with irony)
At least I broke his damn TV. Now he'll have to talk to me.

60 EXT. KNABLE BACK YARD - NIGHT 60

The newly installed SATELLITE DISH. It looks eerily organic. The black mouth of the dish could be the maw of a beast. Thick reptile-like cables lead from it into the house.

A WORKMAN is finishing bolting the dish to its base. With his hollow red eyes and stark white skin stretched over a skeletal frame, he could be an extra from "Night of the Living Dead." WIDEN ANGLE to show Roy and Mr. Spike standing near.

SPIKE
Wellll, Roy, all set for the TV adventure of a lifetime?

Finished, the workman passes. Roy reacts to his appearance.

(CONTINUED)

60 CONTINUED:

60

SPIKE
(off Roy's look)
Slim Fast. *

(goes to dish)
Remember, you'll have to adjust the dish to fine-tune reception. Like this.

Spike moves the dish back and forth. We see LIGHTNING in the distance and hear the ROLL OF THUNDER.

61 EXT. FRONT OF KNABLE HOUSE - NIGHT

61

The sleek, black van is at the curb. The door slides open and Spike enters. LIGHTNING & THUNDER are getting closer.

SPIKE
Enjoy your system, Roy. We'll be in touch.

The van shoots away from the curb and we HEAR the hollow sound of SPIKE'S LAUGHTER. Roy yells at the van:

ROY
That way's a dead end!

Roy goes back into the house as Helen drives up. She gets out, looks at the van speeding away, wonders what's going on.

62 EXT. STREET DEAD END - NIGHT

62

The van speeds towards the DEAD END SIGN. Just before it crashes into it, the van DE-MATERIALIZES. Spike's LAUGHTER pierces the night and we...

CUT TO:

63 INT. KNABLE DEN - NIGHT

63

HELEN as she screams at...

...the monstrous abomination...the new WIDE SCREEN TV SET. The set from hell nearly takes up a whole wall in Roy's den.

ROY
Now honey, keep an open mind. There's no obligation--got it on a <u>free</u> trial. It's a <u>whole</u> satellite system. Over <u>SIX HUNDRED channels</u>.

HELEN
(speechless)
It's... it's...

Roy turns it on via the new remote controller.

64 VIDEO INSERT - AUTOPSIES OF THE RICH AND FAMOUS 64*

65 DELETE 65 *

66 DELETE 66*

67 **INT. KNABLE DEN - NIGHT** 67

Helen watches this, dumbfounded.

ROY
Salesman said we'd get a lot of shows you can't get on regular TV.

Roy turns to Helen, but she's gone.

68 **INT. ROY & HELEN'S BEDROOM - NIGHT** 68

Helen throws open a suitcase, angrily packing.

HELEN
That <u>did</u> it, that <u>did</u> it, that <u>did</u> it.

69 INT. ROY'S DEN - NIGHT (END OF AUTOPSIES INSERT) 69 *

O.S. LIGHTNING AND THUNDER. The TV reception CUTS IN AND OUT.

ROY
Oh-oh. Maybe the dish need adjusting.

70 INT. KITCHEN - NIGHT 70

Suitcase in hand, Helen tapes a note to the fridge.

71 EXT. KNABLE BACK YARD - NIGHT 71

In the pouring rain, Roy is trying to move the dish like Spike showed him. Helen stomps out to Roy, carrying her suitcase.

ROY
Gotta improve the reception!

She picks up a shovel and begins pounding the dish.

HELEN
Yeah? Well how's this, Roy! You receiving this! You getting this!?

ROY
Helen, whattaya doing?

He grabs the shovel from her. Behind them, the satellite dish ominously revolves, the mouth slowly turning toward them...

HELEN
I'm leaving, Roy. I want a man who'd rather touch me instead of his remote control!

She picks up her suitcase. Roy grabs her. Behind them, the dish ANIMATES, the mouth now elastic, moving...

ROY
Helen, wait!

A BRIGHT LIGHT RADIATES OUT from the dish, enveloping them. They turn toward it--and a sudden FURIOUS WIND wrenches Helen's suitcase from her grasp--if flies into the dish, disappearing in a FLASH OF LIGHT.

HELEN SCREAMS and reaches out to Roy--but the thing is drawing them both in to the mouth until...

...the intense white light freezes and diffuses their images and the particles are suddenly sucked en masse into the mouth of the dish--and they're gone! Hold on the dish for a beat. Silent. Motionless.

SMASH CUT TO:

72 INT. FIBER OPTIC TUNNEL 72

POV SHOT as we hurtle at high speed through a surrealistic fiber optic tunnel... zooming past pulsating shafts of light... through 3-D webs of computer circuitry and Daliesque dreamscapes...

...as a jumble of demented SOUNDS ROAR louder and louder... we tumble down a twisting tube, through holographic video images...

...and as a SQUARE OF LIGHT at the end of the tunnel grows LARGER AND LARGER we see it's a grainy VIDEO IMAGE of SPIKE'S GRINNING FACE...

SPIKE
(booming, echoing)
Fasten your seatbelts, folks, it's going to be a bumpy ride... HA-HA-Haaaaa...

...as we hurtle toward Spike's image, his CACKLING MOUTH FILLS THE HUGE SCREEN and we BURST through the center of his open mouth and...

SMASH CUT TO:

73 INT. GAME SHOW 73

CLOSE ON a smiling MOUTH.

MOUTH
And welcome back to...

ZOOM OUT to reveal GUY SQUIRLY, a toothy game show host.

SQUIRLY (cont'd)
"You Can't Win!" Let's meet our new contestants, Roy and Helen Knable!

AUDIENCE APPLAUSE. The set revolves, bringing Roy and Helen onto the show. Disoriented, they squint into the harsh lights, trying to get their bearings, <u>their memory temporarily blanked out</u>.

SQUIRLY
Do you know the rules of our game?

HELEN
What game?

AUDIENCE LAUGHTER.

SQUIRLY
The game with <u>these</u> great prizes! Jay?

(CONTINUED)

73 CONTINUED: 73

O.S. ANNOUNCER
(fast and super-modulated)
Right, Guy! Feast your eyes on this...

A BLONDE BIMBO gestures to a curtain which opens, revealing the ultimate recliner-chair. The Lounge-Master 9000. The AUDIENCE OOHS REVERENTLY.

O.S. ANNOUNCER (cont'd)
The Lounge-Master 9000. You'll achieve new levels of lethargy with the all-new Lounge-Master. LOUNGE-MASTER! Technology designed for the slothful in mind! But that's not all! For the gourmet loafer--

CUT TO:

74 INSERT STILL 74

of a CAN of "Sushi Whip" and crackers.

O.S. ANNOUNCER
--a year's supply of Sushi Whip! The scrumptious, squeezable snack topping flavored with REAL EEL! And win or lose...

CUT TO:

75 INSERT STILL 75 *

of encyclopedias bound in red leather.

O.S. ANNOUNCER
All contestants take home the latest edition of the Encyclopedia Satannica! Back to you, Guy!

AUDIENCE APPLAUSE

76 INT. GAME SHOW 76

SQUIRLY
Let's learn a little more about our players. Roy, I your hobbies include lying inert and collecting snacks of the world! * *

Roy looks at Helen. What kind of a quiz show is this?

(CONTINUED)

76 CONTINUED: 76

SQUIRLY (cont'd)
And Helen, in high school you were President of the Anal Retentive Club and voted Most Likely To Marry Someone Rich and Famous. Ho! Better take a recount on that vote!

HELEN
Wait a minute! What is this--!

As she starts to stand, metal bands shoot from their chairs, securing their arms. They struggle, but they're held fast.

SQUIRLY
Don't go away, Knables. It's time to play...
(with O.S. audience)
YOU-CAN'T-WIN!
(referring to a card in his hand)
First question's for you, Roy. On your last wedding anniversary, you missed the romantic dinner your wife had planned. The reason...

As Squirly gives the choices, they are revealed on a game board.

SQUIRLY (cont'd)
A: car trouble. B: you were running a marathon. C: you were in a bar, swilling beer, watching World Series.

ROY
It was car trouble, like I said.

BUZZER SOUNDS. Wrong answer.

SQUIRLY
No. Can you take it, Helen?

HELEN
You were watching <u>baseball</u>!?

SQUIRLY
That's right!

Helen throws Roy an angry, accusing look. WILD APPLAUSE. The scoreboard behind them rings up 500 points.

(CONTINUED)

76 CONTINUED: (2)

76

SQUIRLY
Helen, this one's for you. Recently you went to Hawaii for a business conference, but didn't invite Roy along because A: spouses weren't allowed to attend. B: you wanted time for yourself. Or C: you were secretly embarrassed to be seen with such a flop-a-roo husband!

HELEN
A: spouses weren't invited.

BUZZER SOUNDS. Wrong answer.

ROY
It's C! I don't fit your yuppie corporate image, is that it!

SQUIRLY
Co-RRECT!

AUDIENCE APPLAUDS WILDLY. Scoreboard rings up to 1,000 points.

SQUIRLY
Now it's time for the final question. And what's that mean?

AUDIENCE (O.S.)
THE PIT!

Suddenly Roy and Helen's chairs are hoisted into the air, swung over center stage--right over trap doors which open, revealing a pit. They look down into the utter blackness, terrified.

SQUIRLY
Yes, the pit. What's down there today, Jay?

O.S. ANNOUNCER
Lots of slimy, crawly, bad things, Guy!

SQUIRLY
You have ten seconds to answer the question correctly... or...
(looks down at the pit; ORGAN STING)
...be eliminated. Name the person who's recently been seeing a former lover. Is it A: Roy. B: Helen. Or C: Roy and Helen.

A TICKING CLOCK counts down. Squirly reaches for a lever to send the Knables plummeting.

(CONTINUED)

76 CONTINUED: (3) 76

Roy and Helen exchange looks, wondering who is the guilty one. Time is almost out when Helen yells:

HELEN
I know! The answer is C. The former lovers we've been seeing... are each other.

Squirly's hand is poised over the lever for a few beats, then:

SQUIRLY
Yooooooou're riiiiiight!

AUDIENCE APPLAUSE. QUIZ SHOW MUSIC PLAYS. Trap door slides shut. Roy and Helen are lowered to the floor. The metal bonds release and they hug, relieved. Then, realizing what's been revealed about their relationship, they shrink from the embrace.

SQUIRLY
We'll be back for the Knable's Fantasy Vacation round... right after this...

CUT TO:

77 VIDEO INSERT - LIVER IN A BUCKET COMMERCIAL 77

A MOM puts a bucket of fast food "LIVER IN A BUCKET" on a table as DAD and KIDS "ooooo" and "ahhhh" in delicious anticipation.

MATCH CUT TO:

78 INT. SPIKE'S CONTROL ROOM 78

SAME SCENE - ON TV SCREEN

as this scene continues. PULL BACK to reveal the screen with Roy and Helen is just one of hundreds of screens... a giant video checkerboard which fills the entire wall of Mr. Spike's TV CONTROL ROOM -- a dark, shadowy, dungeon-like netherworld humming with high-tech equipment.

CROWLEY, an ex-night-club comic, one of Spike's minions, walks into the shot. Beside him is BIERCE, young, cocky, pony-tailed, wearing a TRAINEE badge. Crowley is filling Bierce in on the operation. As they stroll, other execs are seen bustling in B.G.

CROWLEY
Lemme tell ya, you lucked into the right level of the Underworld, pal.
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

78 CONTINUED: 78

CROWLEY (cont'd)
You'll cool your heels here for the rest of eternity--
(checks to see if anyone is listening)
--if you kiss the right ass. Say--you ever catch my act? I once opened for Liberace in Las Vegas. *

Bierce looks O.S. at...

...a giant, floor-to-ceiling wall that looks like a stadium scoreboard.

On the left side, beneath the heading "VISITORS," is a column of names--the people who, like Roy, Helen and the Seidenbaums, have entered the hellish TV world.

To the right of each name is a horizontal line of translucent square tiles which light up to mark each person's progress in the TV world. At the end, on the far right, is a lighted square marked REDEMPTION.

CROWLEY
Our scoreboard. Kinda keeps track of the number of "souls batted in." Heh-heh-heh.

Ignoring Crowley, Bierce steps through a curtain into Spike's inner sanctum, an open air "office" in the center of the room. Spike is in a high-backed leather chair at the head of a long, shiny black table. WETZEL, Spike's nervous, ass-kissing numbers man, hovers nearby.

WETZEL
(hands Spike a black folder)
Time for the Seidenbaums, sir.

SPIKE
Punch 'em up.

The VIDEO ENGINEER hits a button on the vast master control.

79 VIDEO INSERT - JAPANESE STREET 79

On the HUGE ON-LINE WALL SCREEN, we see Mr. & Mrs. Seidenbaum, dressed as tourists in an 1960's Japanese movie.

MR. SPIKE (V.O.)
Ah, the Seidenbaums... yearning to explore exotic locales. This episode takes them to Tokyo...

(CONTINUED)

79 CONTINUED: 79

Mrs. Seidenbaum gets into a rickshaw and Mr. Seidenbaum backs up to take her picture. He sees something O.S., drops his camera and runs. Mrs. Seidenbaum thinks he is just clowning around...

MR. SPIKE (V.O.)
...and they're having a wonderful time. Starring in their very own movie: "The Seidenbaums versus..."

The screen cuts to a shot of GODZILLA stepping on and crushing the rickshaw--and Mrs. Seidenbaum.

80 INT. SPIKE'S CONTROL ROOM 80

MR. SPIKE
...Godzilla. Sayonara!

On the scoreboard, the last square in Mrs. Seidenbaum's chart lights up in red and flashes GAME OVER.

Spike makes a quick sweep of his hand--and his master remote controller snaps into his hand. (NOTE: HIS REMOTE IS KEPT IN A HOLSTER ON THE INSIDE OF HIS FOREARM. WHEN HE WANTS IT, A SPRING MECHANISM SHOOTS IT INTO HIS HAND.)

Using his remote, Spike flicks off the screen. On cue, Crowley and Wetzel respond with sycophantic applause and AD LIB "BRAVOS." The newcomer Bierce is stunned by what he's seen.

SPIKE
Now that's entertainment.

A quick movement of Spike's hand makes the REMOTE QUICKLY RETRACT TO ITS HOLSTER WITH A MECHANICAL "CLICK."

BIERCE
Shocking.

Spike swivels his eyes to Bierce--a Sherman Tank lining up a shot.

CROWLEY
This is Bierce, sir. Our new intern. *

SPIKE
Ah, Mr. Bierce. If you can't stomach the sight of blood--

BIERCE
It's not the blood I find distressing. It's your lack of subtext.

(CONTINUED)

80 CONTINUED: 80

SPIKE
Film school graduate?

BIERCE
Yes, sir. USC.

Spike sighs and eyes the heavens. Oh no, not another one.

BIERCE (cont'd)
My thesis was on Kurosawa. Unfortunately, the night of the graduation party my faculty advisor caught me with his wife -- and well, he's a bit of a gun nut and --

SPIKE
(cuts him off)
Mr. Bierce, let me educate you about our operation. Here at Hellvision, we've turned soul acquisition into an entertainment extravaganza--for the benefit of one <u>verrrry</u> demanding viewer below.

CROWLEY
The Chairman himself.

SPIKE
And he has an insatiable appetite for misfortune. It's our job to keep him well fed...
(gestures to the wall of TVs)
with an eclectic offering of light amusements. NOT SUBTEXT!

A SHARP PIERCING SHRIEK. Wetzel picks up hell's version of the telephone--a headset attached to what looks like a coiled vacuum cleaner hose.

WETZEL
It's Him.

Spike winces and steels himself before taking the phone.

SPIKE
(into headset, obsequious)
Hello sir... did you like the last scenario?... lacked imagination?! But, sir... the numbers?
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

80 CONTINUED: (2) 80

SPIKE (cont'd)
(impatiently motions to Wetzel, who gives him another folder)
Right on quota, sir... no, that's with the Knable's sale cranked in.
(turns away from group, sotto:)
Their upcoming episodes are right up your alley... I won't disappoint you... No sir. Now about that secretary you promised--
(he's cut off, rifles headset back to Wetzel)
Guy gives me the creeps.
(to his staff)
What are you stiffs staring at!

Eavesdropping STAFFERS scatter like roaches--revealing DUCKER, an officious, bird-like woman with a huge hairy mole on her cheek.

DUCKER
Ducker, contracts. I'm here to pick up the Knable agreement.

Spike eyes her with disdain, turns his back on her.

WETZEL
The Knable contract was a verbal.

DUCKER
A verbal contract? But-but-that's not proper procedure.

SPIKE
(whirling on her)
In case you missed the player introductions, Ducker, we're the evil side. If we can't bend the rules, who can?

DUCKER
I'm sure there will be a protest filed. Even the Nazis had regulations.

SPIKE
And look what happened to those pussies.

In a huff, she turns on her heels and scurries away.

(CONTINUED)

80 CONTINUED: (3) 80

WETZEL
Time for Mr. Marsh's moment of truth, sir.

The engineer hits a button.

81 VIDEO INSERT - EXT. STREET 81

On the huge on-line screen is a MAN who warily approaches the front door of a house.

SPIKE (V.O.)
Ah, "Most Dangerous Home Videos."

The man rings the doorbell and the house EXPLODES.

82 INT. SPIKE'S CONTROL ROOM 82

SPIKE (cont'd)
I have <u>such</u> a subtle touch.

on the scoreboard, Mr. Marsh's chart flashes in red "GAME OVER." His REDEMPTION SQUARE goes dark.

BIERCE
So the object then is to reach the end--

SPIKE
The object, Mr. Bierce, is to kill them <u>before</u> they reach it.

CROWLEY
Take the Knables. Just checked in. They got 24 hours. They survive that long--we have to send them back.

Spike angrily grunts--showing his contempt for regulations.

CROWLEY (cont'd)
Part of our treaty with the Other Side--kind of a Geneva Convention in the war for souls.

WETZEL
Of course, the Knables don't have a <u>chance</u> of surviving.

SPIKE
Correct. You see, Mr. Bierce, I pick my candidates carefully.
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

82 CONTINUED: 82

SPIKE (cont'd)
(gazes up at the screens, a maniacal glint in his eyes)
And none more carefully than Roy Knable. A pathetic loser... dying to escape his humdrum existence. He'll go down quickly--but I pray--not painlessly.

BIERCE
How long do they usually last in there?

WETZEL
(reading officiously from folder)
Longest survivors: Mr. and Mrs. James Conroy. Lasted eighteen hours, seven minutes. Finally fell into a pit of puff adders on Wide World of Poisonous Snakes.

SPIKE
Pity that got cancelled. I miss those long agonizing death scenes.

WETZEL
Record for shortest visit is held by Reverend Arnold Swazey. Nine minutes, three seconds. Fatal heart attack while judging the Miss Nude Netherworld Pageant.

SPIKE
But whether they go quickly or not ...in the end they <u>always</u> join us.

CROWLEY
Not always, sir. You're forgetting that one guy who escaped. Remember you--

SPIKE
(skewers Crowley with a look)
A mistake that will <u>never</u> happen again, Mr. Crowley!

CROWLEY
Hey--it wasn't me who loused up.

SPIKE
Are you saying it was MY fault?

CROWLEY
(realizing he has overstepped)
Whoa--nothing of the kind. You know me, always jokin'. Heh-heh.

(CONTINUED)

82 CONTINUED: (2) 82

SPIKE
Mr. Crowley, I think--perhaps--you could use a little--

CROWLEY
No! Don't-don't-don't! Please!

SPIKE
--field work!

CROWLEY
No! I'm sorry! NOOOOOOOOOO!

Spike flicks his wrist, the REMOTE SNAPS INTO HIS HAND. He aims it at Crowley. A BEAM SHOOTS OUT and turns a SCREAMING CROWLEY into a GRAINY VIDEO IMAGE that is sucked into the on-line TV.

SPIKE
(to Bierce)
Screw up here and you're dead meat, dead meat.

Spike and Bierce lock glares -- a warning from Spike, telling this upstart to stay in his place. But Bierce isn't intimidated.

Spike goes to the control board, watches SQUIRLY on the quiz show on one of the monitors.

SQUIRLY (ON TV)
Mr. and Mrs. Knable, let's see where you're going on your fantasy vacation!

Squirly spins a huge GAME WHEEL separated into sections marked "Door One," "Door One," and "Door One."

SPIKE
Someplace south of here, perhaps? A balmy abyss with special accomodations for the <u>frequent fryer</u>. Heh-heh-heh.

83 INT. GAME SHOW (TV WORLD) 83

The wheel stops on, of course, "Door One."

SQUIRLY
Door One it is!!!

AUDIENCE APPLAUSE. A curtain opens, revealing a door filled with electronic TV snow. This is a SNOW WINDOW, the conduit between channels within this TV world.

(CONTINUED)

83 CONTINUED: 83

HELEN (ON TV)
Roy, what's going on... ?

SQUIRLY
You're going on the trip of a lifetime!

He shoves Roy and Helen through the doorway of TV snow and...

84 INT. WRESTLING ARENA (TV WORLD) - NIGHT 84

... they're slammed into another channel. DRESSED AS WRESTLERS, Roy and Helen are being herded down the aisle by their burly CORNER MEN. The CROWD is going berserk.

HELEN
Roy! What is this!

At the center of the ring is the RING ANNOUNCER.

RING ANNOUNCER
(booming bombastically)
For the main event! Mixed Pairs Wrestling! No holds barred! No transfusions allowed! A battle to the Death!

Roy and Helen halt at the ring apron, totally discombobulated.

HELEN
This has to be a dream! It has to!

Their burly CORNER MEN toss the reluctant pair into the ring.

RING ANNOUNCER
In this corner, weighing in at a combined three hundred and ninety six pounds! Roy "Couch Potato" Knable, And his wife...Helen the Harridan!

The CROWD CHEERS wildly.

HELEN
(slapping herself)
Oh, wake-up, wake-up!

RING ANNOUNCER
Their challengers... the vilest, evillest duo ever to disgrace the ring! That ogre and ogress... the Gorgons!

CROWD BOOS at their opponents: a HUGE, UGLY, MAN & WOMAN TAG TEAM.

(CONTINUED)

84 CONTINUED: 84

HELEN
(sees them, mouth drops)
Oh... my... God.

ROY
Honey, let's stay calm here.

HELEN
Stay calm! Stay calm!
(eyes narrow)
You lied to me, Roy. I spent 5 hours making duck a l'orange and you were in a bar watching baseball!

ROY
What about you? That "business" trip to Hawaii. Who were you sharing a hammock with? Steve--that guy with the eighty-dollar haircut?

HELEN
Oh! You!

Enraged, she hits Roy about the head, he ducks, covering up. TV ANNOUNCER, ringside, talks into a big, old-style microphone.

TV ANNOUNCER
Welcome to the Underworld Wrestling Federation Mixed Pairs Championship. Brought to you by...
(holds up bottle)
"Bulk-O." The thirst-quencher now packed with 57% more steroids! It's what the pros drink! *

Helen stops swinging on Roy.

HELEN
All these years I've been faithful to a man who brings Moon Pies to bed! *

The REFEREE and the Gorgons stand at the center of the ring. The ref beckons the Knables to join them.

ROY
I think he means us.

Roy and Helen join the ref and the Gorgons at ring center.

REF
Okay, everything goes. Maim, murder each other, I don't care. But keep it clean.

(CONTINUED)

84 CONTINUED: (2) 84

ROY
Wait a minute. Do we look like wrestlers??

HELEN
We have no idea why we're here. I mean, I'm senior product manager for a vitamin company.

ROY
Senior product manager?

HELEN
I got a promotion.

REF
Now go to your corners and when the bell rings, kill or be killed.

The Gorgons go to their corner.

ROY
Why didn't you tell me you got promoted?

HELEN
Oh Roy, you know why. Because my success threatens you. *

ROY
Helen, that's crazy. Your success does not threaten me. *

HELEN
Does too!

ROY
Does not!

DING! The bell rings to begin round one. The Gorgon man comes across the ring toward Roy. Helen sees him approaching. *

HELEN
Oh-oh. *

ROY
(turns to see him)
Okay, I've watched enough wrestling to know one thing, Helen. It's fake. No one really gets hurt.

The brute goes airborne. Helen ducks out of the way as Mr. Gorgon lands a flying body slam on Roy.

(CONTINUED)

84 CONTINUED: (3) 84

TV ANNOUNCER (V.O.)
OOOOOHH! A flying body slam!

ROY
(pinned under the Gorgon)
Helen! It's not fake!

As the Gorgon rolls off, Roy tries to stand and receives a hard punch in the stomach, doubling him over.

TV ANNOUNCER (V.O.)
A vicious punch to Knable's breadbasket!

He then grabs Roy's arm, jerks him up and slings him across the ring, smashing into the Gorgon corner post.

He wobbles, dazed.

TV ANNOUNCER (V.O.)
Knable's out on his feet! His legs are rubber bands!

Roy is kneed in the groin by Mrs. Gorgon through the ropes.

TV ANNOUNCER (V.O.)
OOOOOHH! Cash in the family jewels!

85 INT. SPIKE'S CONTROL ROOM 85

Spike watches Roy's pummeling on the huge on-line SCREEN.

Wetzel and Bierce stand near, Bierce wincing at the blows.

SPIKE
Don't look away, Mr. Bierce. Enjoy the final excruciating moments of a pitiful life.

86 INT. WRESTLING ARENA (TV WORLD) - NIGHT 86

Roy is hefted on Mr. Gorgon's-shoulders and spun around. With each revolution, Mrs. Gorgon punches Roy's face.

TV ANNOUNCER (V.O.)
Knable's in the Death Spin!

Roy is sent flying across the ring, slamming into the Knable corner post. He slumps to the floor next to Helen.

HELEN
Roy! Can you hear me! Get up!

(CONTINUED)

86 CONTINUED: 86

Mr. Gorgon tags Mrs. Gorgon and she tramps ominously toward Roy.

TV ANNOUNCER (V.O.)
Oh-oh, heeere comes that Gorgon gal to finish the job!

A huge shadow looms. Helen looks up... Mrs. Gorgon stands over them, murder in her eyes. She grabs Roy by the hair, raises his head and bunches her iron fist, to deal the death blow ...

HELEN
Leave him alone you bitch!

She stops in mid-punch, almost shocked by Helen's outburst. She releases Roy's hair and slowly stalks a retreating Helen.

TV ANNOUNCER (V.O.)
Whoa Nellie! Caaaaaat fight!

HELEN
I'm sorry. I'm sure you're not a bitch. Roy! Wake up! You know, for a full figured woman, you really wear that outfit well. ROY!!!

Helen is backed into the Gorgon corner, pinned between the Mr outside the ropes and the Mrs in front. Ma Gorgon pulls back her fist, ready to permanently turn Helen's lights out... when Helen does a lithe aerobic move and ducks out of the way...

... and Mrs. Gorgon's thunderous punch connects into her husband's mid section, knocking him into the seats and out cold.

TV ANNOUNCER (V.O.)
The Gorgon's in the seats! He's history!

By the time Mrs. Gorgon has gathered her wits, Helen has escaped the trap. Enraged, the wrestler whirls and comes after Helen.

TV ANNOUNCER (V.O.)
Now its the Harridan versus the Beast for the championship!

Gorgon lunges, Helen bends to the right, eluding her. Another clumsy lunge, Helen bends to the left. Helen is gaining confidence, playing to the crowd, taunting the tiring ogress.

HELEN
C'mon, you hefty bag, you're nothin' ...

(CONTINUED)

86 CONTINUED: (2) 86

The ogress swipes at Helen, knocking her across the ring into the ropes. She slumps to the canvas, near the ringside TV Anncr.

TV ANNOUNCER
Ma Knable is down! She's down! This could be the end!

Clearing her head, Helen sees to her horror, her nail is broken.

HELEN
My nail!

Helen grabs the TV Announcer's heavy mike and as Mrs. Gorgon closes, crowns her with it. Ma Gorgon falls like a redwood, out cold. The CROWD leaps to their feet, cheering uproariously. *

Helen goes to Roy, who is now coming to.

ROY
What happened?

HELEN
We won. Or rather, I won.

Wobbly, Roy gets to his feet. The crowd is chanting KNAAA-BLE, KNAAA-BLE, KNAAA-BLE! The ref raises their hands in victory.

HELEN
(off Roy's hurt look)
Okay, you won too.

ROY
Damn right. And your success does not threaten me.

HELEN
Does too.

The ref releases their arms and Roy sinks to the canvas as... growing like a stain in the center of the canvas floor a SNOW WINDOW slowly opens. Roy and Helen don't see it as it gets nearer to them ...

87 INT. SPIKE'S CONTROL ROOM 87

Spike watches this, not pleased by the turn of events.

BIERCE
(trying to hide a smile)
Looks like that "pathetic loser" isn't going to be as easy as we thought.

Spike fixes Bierce with a cold, fierce eye, then turns back to the screen ... a slight pinprick of worry registering.

DISSOLVE TO:

88 EXT. KNABLE HOME - MORNING 88

Darryl, wearing a backpack, rides his distinctive BMX bike (with the double 00 racing number) up the driveway ...

89 EXT. KNABLE BACK YARD - MORNING 89

... into the back and skids to a stop as he sees the dish.

DARRYL
Totally wicked!

90 INT. ROY'S DEN - DAY 90

Darryl stands before the enormous TV. We HEAR front door SLAM.

DARRYL
Excellent!

DIANE
(entering)
Where's mom and da--
(sees TV, reacts)
Oh my GOD ...

DARRYL
Dad must've got it last night.

Darryl picks up the remote. Like his father, he's captivated by its hi-tech design and feel. He presses "on."

91 VIDEO INSERT - CORONER'S EXAMINING ROOM 91

Two MEDICAL EXAMINERS prepare for an autopsy on a body under a sheet.

(CONTINUED)

91 CONTINUED: 91

ANNCR (V.O.)
(a la Robin Leach)
Come explore the mind and body of France's last reigning septuagenarian sexpot... Princess Catherine de Nouemois... on Autopsies of the Rich and Famous!

Super: AUTOPSIES OF THE RICH AND FAMOUS. An examiner brings a whirring circular saw down to slice open the skull.

92 INT. ROY'S DEN - DAY 92

Grossed out, Diane flees the room. Darryl changes channel to...

93 VIDEO INSERT - THE POPE 93

...we see the Pope's pointed hat moving across the floor as a TINY ECHOING VOICE chatters in Italian from inside it.

ANOTHER TV ANNCR
(hyperbolic hype)
When a radiation accident turns His Eminence into His Insignificance, the Vatican's in an uproar, next on... The Incredible Shrinking Pope!

94 INT. ROY'S DEN - DAY 94

DARRYL
Baa-zarre.

He changes channel and TV SCREEN changes to a documentary.

95 VIDEO INSERT - EXT. GREAT WHITE NORTH 95

TWO TINY FIGURES, far in the distance, move across a white frozen landscape. The clipped, very British David Attenborough-like narrator is heard v.o. * *

NARRATOR (V.O.)
Welcome to Mutual of Brimstone's Wild Kingdom. In the vast frozen regions of the north, the temperature can plummet to minus sixty-five degrees ...

96 INT. ROY'S DEN - DAY 96

Darryl turns off the TV, going to the kitchen for breakfast.

97 EXT. GREAT WHITE NORTH (TV WORLD) - DAY 97

We see the tiny figures in the distance.

HELEN (O.S.)
We've been walking for hours!

ROY (O.S.)
Just keep moving.

NARRATOR (V.O.)
... and exposure to these conditions for any length of time will cause frostbite, hypothermia, and soon, death.

A CLOSER SHOT of the figures show Roy and Helen dressed in Eskimo parkas. Helen stops, exhausted.

HELEN
That's it. If this is some kind of nightmare, I'm waiting right here 'til it's over.

ROY
We'll freeze to death if we stop here.

HELEN
Roy, where <u>is</u> here?

NARRATOR (V.O.)
In ancient Eskimo lore, this region was called "Oooki Waka Nooki"...

HELEN
And where is that <u>stupid</u> voice coming from??

NARRATOR (V.O.)
... or "land of the ravenous ice wolves."

HELEN
Ravenous wolves. Super.

Helen plops down, beat. Suddenly a realization hits her. *

HELEN *
Wait a minute... I remember now. We were * in the backyard -- it was raining -- * there was a bright flash -- lightning! * We were struck by... Roy... are we... * dead? *

ROY
If we are, I kinda hoped for a <u>cushier</u> afterlife.

(CONTINUED)

97 CONTINUED: 97

HELEN
(starting to cry)
Our kids. Who's going to take care of them?
(gasps)
Oh my God! I have a presentation to the VPs on Monday. And a focus group! I'm going to miss my focus group!

ROY
(dryly)
Helen, don't worry. You're allowed a sick day. Just call in dead, they'll understand

Helen stares at Roy.

NARRATOR (V.O.)
Of course, survival in this desolate land can only be achieved by those working in harmony--

ROY & HELEN
(together, to the sky)
Shut-up!

NARRATOR (V.O.)
-- because just as the wolves work as a team, so must humans -- or suffer oblivion.

Helen stands, recalling something else.

HELEN
I remember! Why I was out in the rain. I was... leaving you.

This sinks into Roy. He remembers, too.

(CONTINUED)

97 CONTINUED: (2) 97

ROY
Guess you had that one planned. Miss Senior Product Manager wouldn't be stuck with a faucet salesman all her life, would she?

She just looks at him, aghast.

HELEN
You unbelievable jerk. I wouldn't be stuck with someone who hated being a faucet salesman -- but didn't have the guts to do something about it!

Roy is stung--there is is, the ugly truth. He is about to respond when a BLOOD CURDLING HOWL of a WOLF is heard in the distance.

NARRATOR (V.O.)
Once the wolf pack has scented prey, attack is swift and merciless.

Another chilling HOWL, CLOSER. Roy looks to Helen--and she's gone--running for her life ahead of him. He takes off after her.

98 INT. KNABLE KITCHEN - DAY 98

Darryl goes to open the refrigerator and sees a note stuck to the door. As he reaches for it, Diane grabs it.

DIANE
Give me that.
(reading)
"Dear kids: Had to leave for awhile. Will call tomorrow to explain. Love, mom."
(throws note in air with joy)
Killer! The house to myself!

As she jumps to the phone, Darryl picks up the note.

DARRYL
(brightening, relieved)
They did it. They went away just like Billy's mom and dad.

DIANE
(dialing)
Yeah. And now it's your turn to go away. Dweebnik.
(into phone)
Shelly? It's me. Guess what?

(CONTINUED)

98 CONTINUED: 98

DARRYL
Oh no. Another meeting of Airheads Anonymous.

DIANE
(into phone)
That's right. My parents are history!

99 EXT. GREAT WHITE NORTH (TV WORLD) - DAY 99

Roy and Helen dash madly across the snow, chilling WOLF HOWLS closer. They run up a small rise and stop suddenly as they see ...

... a MAN on a frozen lake below, sawing a hole in the ice. Many other holes have been cut, as if the man was prospecting for something under the ice. An ice fishing shack sits near him.

100 EXT. KNABLE BACKYARD - DAY 100

Darryl gets on his bike and pauses to look at the satellite dish, 20 feet away. He senses something strange about this thing. Suddenly Rivets, the neighbor's dog, pokes his head through a loose board in the fence and BARKS VICIOUSLY, startling Darryl.

He starts to ride away. But he sees something that makes him slam on his brakes. He rides up to the dish, bends down ...

...and picks up HELEN'S WATCH from the grass. The band is singed and broken, the crystal cracked. The hands are stopped at 10:30. He thinks about this for a beat or two... not hearing the METALLIC CREAKING of the dish behind him as it swivels to swallow him.

He pockets the watch and begins to peddle away... when an odd wind kicks up. He realizes his bike isn't moving forward... in fact, he's going backwards! HE'S BEING SUCKED INTO THE DISH!

His hat flies off, disappearing into it in a flash of light. Jumping off his bike, he grabs for anything--a lawn chair, a bush, a tree trunk--to stop his inexorable slide into the dish.

His bike rolls backwards, consumed by the dish, disappearing in a bright flash. As if sated, the dish swivels back. All is quiet.

DIANE (O.S.)
What are you doing?

(CONTINUED)

100 CONTINUED: 100

Lawn chairs, uprooted bushes are strewn about. Darryl is still hugging the tree.

DARRYL
Did you SEE THAT?? The dish ate my BMX!

DIANE
(looks at him for a long beat, then:)
Is this some kind of male puberty thing?
(exits into the house)

101 EXT. FROZEN LAKE (TV WORLD) - DAY 101

Roy and Helen approach the man, who is busy cutting another hole.

ROY
Hello... yoo-hoo...

The man whirls--it's Crowley! His face crusted with ice crystals.

CROWLEY
(terrified, wielding ax)
Stay away!
(then, recognizes Roy)
...hey, you're Knable.

Roy and Helen exchange looks. "He knows us?"

CROWLEY (cont'd)
(going back to his work)
I'm looking for the conduit. I know it's here somewhere.

HELEN
Conduit?

CROWLEY
The window to the next channel. I'm not spending eternity in this deep freeze.
(brushes snow from the ice)
It's here! Look!

Roy and Helen look. Through the ice we see a round SNOW WINDOW.

NARRATOR (V.O.)
Closing in with great cunning, the alpha wolf leads the attack.

(CONTINUED)

101 CONTINUED: 101

They look up to see--a PACK OF WOLVES silently closing in. The enormous red-eyed beasts bare their razor-sharp teeth and charge.

ROY
The shack!

They run all out for the fishing shack, the wolves in pursuit, rapidly cutting the distance between them.

NARRATOR (V.O.)
Life in the wild kingdom--and everywhere--is full of unforeseen dangers ...

The wolves are almost on them ...

NARRATOR (V.O.)
That's why you need Mutual of Brimstone's accident coverage.

Crowley is first into the shack. Roy and Helen are almost to it, but Roy falls and the lead wolf grabs his boot in its jaws!

ROY
Helen!

Helen grabs Roy's shoulders and tugs. The boot comes free in the wolf's mouth. She pulls him into the shack to safety.

102 INT. KNABLE KITCHEN - DAY 102

DARRYL
(on the phone)
Yes sir, officer, I want to report a missing bike... Stolen? Well no... it kinda de-materialized. Huh? No, I'm <u>not</u> on drugs. Oh forget it!
(bangs down phone, frustrated)
No one believes me.

103 INT. ROY'S DEN - DAY 103

Darryl peeks around the door jamb, looking at the monstrous TV screen, it's cyclopian eye stares back blankly. The DOOR BELL RINGS. Darryl turns and sees Diane opening it and greeting a GROUP of her DITZY FRIENDS.

104 INT. ICE FISHING SHACK (TV WORLD) - DAY 104

The small shack sits directly on the ice. A lighted lantern generates the only heat. Crowley has just finished telling them where they are. They sit in stupefied silence for a few beats.

(CONTINUED)

104 CONTINUED: 104

HELEN
Let me get this straight... we've been sucked into some kind of a... TV world? *

ROY
Are you saying that salesman was...

CROWLEY
Mr. Spike. Mephistopheles of the cathode ray.
(revenge in his eyes)
And if we ever cross channels again...

HELEN
Roy, how could you do this!

ROY
(lamely defensive)
I didn't know this was part of the deal. For chrissakes, I thought I was buying a TV.

HELEN
(angrily stomping around)
This is great. Just great! You wanted to live in a TV fantasy world. WELL YOU GOT YOUR WISH!
(looks to heavens)
Why couldn't you be into fly fishing like other men!

ROY
Hey, look on the bright side. At least we're not dead.

She shoots him a withering look.

CROWLEY
Not yet. Stay alive for the next twelve hours--poof!--free pass back to reality. Of course your odds of making it are...

Figuring out the odds, he counts on his fingers--and one of his fingers snaps clean off.

CROWLEY
(holding finger)
Damn. The cold's no place for a stiff.

Helen looks at the finger, aghast.

(CONTINUED)

104 CONTINUED: (2) 104

ROY
Now don't panic. I got us into this, I'll get us out.

HELEN
You'll get us out? Your leadership skills couldn't get you out of a T shirt!
(beat, calms herself)
You know that point of no return I told you about?

She takes off her wedding ring and flings it at him. It hits his chest and bounces to the ice.

HELEN
We're there.

She storms to the door and--forgetting where they are--she opens it, revealing a SNARLING WOLF. She slams it and stalks off into the corner and sits, glowering. *

105 INT. SPIKE'S CONTROL ROOM 105

Spike stands imperiously at the head of a long conference table beside a wall draped in black cloth. Seated around the table, shrouded in deep shadow, are a dozen figures -- BOARD MEMBERS of the Chairman's many soul-collecting "industries." Blue clouds of cigar smoke billow up from the table. Bierce and other staffers are in the b.g. in a row of seats against one wall.

As Spike talks, we glimpse the nameplates of a few of the infamous board members: J.GAMBINO, ALCOHOL & DRUGS; R.J.
0A REYNOLDS, TOBACCO; J. STALIN, FIREARMS; R. COHN, LEGAL AFFAIRS; J. JONES, CULTS & KOOLAID; SARAH LEE, CHOLESTEROL.

SPIKE
Fellow board members, I'm glad you could take time out from your many worthwhile activities to join me here today. As you know, Hellvision, under my stewardship, is now annually netting over one-hundred thousand souls--

Spike pauses, expecting applause. Again, silence.

SPIKE (cont'd)
--adding greatly to the numbers your efforts are posting. So, without further ado, I give you... the Hellvision Network's Fall Schedule.

(CONTINUED)

105 CONTINUED: 105

He draws back a curtain, revealing a programming schedule with show titles in their timeslots. Polite APPLAUSE.

SPIKE
First, our great new Friday night line-up.

(stabs board with pointer)Home Shoplifting Channel
David Dukes of Hazard, My Three Sons of Bitches,
.....The Young and the Homeless

Wetzel appears behind Spike and coughs to get Spike's attention.

SPIKE
Excuse me.
(turns to Wetzel, hissing:)
What is it!

WETZEL
Sir, the Takasukis and Mr. Akbar bit the big one -- right on schedule.

SPIKE
(playing up the good news to the board)
DID they? Splendid. Our numbers keep going up and up!

WETZEL
(carefully)
But I feel it's my duty to inform you sir, the Knables have edged into the Green Zone.

MURMURS OF CONCERN ripple through the room.

Bierce peers through a window at the scoreboard, smiling. On the board we see the Knable's line has progressed halfway across to "Redemption." The front edge of the line is now green.

SPIKE
(feigning total confidence)
Aren't we a worry wart. Everything's under control, Mr. Wetzel
(hissing under his breath)
Now back to your post you decomposing DOPE!

Wetzel shrinks off. Bierce raises his hand.

(CONTINUED)

105 CONTINUED: (2) 105

SPIKE
(ignoring Bierce's hand)
Now where was I? Oh yes--

BIERCE
(interrupting, coming forward)
Sir--

SPIKE
Next up in our new line-up is--

BIERCE
Hello--

SPIKE
WHAT is it!

BIERCE
I couldn't help noticing that some of your shows seem, well, a little stale.

SPIKE
(with murderous eyes)
Have you ...

BIERCE
And I've taken the liberty of writing up some fresh concepts of my own.

SPIKE
How ambitious of you, Mr. Bierce.

Spike puts out his hand, Bierce gives him the papers, expectant. Spike quickly peruses the sheet.

SPIKE (cont'd)
Yes... these ideas are sizzling. They're so hot, look... they're actually burning the paper!

The pages go up in flames. The board members and staffers erupt in LAUGHTER. Humiliated, Bierce exits. Spike drops the pages, steps on them and turns to the group.

SPIKE
Continuing on Fridays, a new show everyone will be buzzing about: Nude Beekeeping.

106 INT. ROY'S DEN - DAY 106

Darryl is watching TV...

107 VIDEO INSERT - AEROBICS WITH ADOLPH 107

On the screen is a TITLE CARD that reads "AEROBICS WITH ADOLPH." Screen cuts to ...

... ADOLPH HITLER, in his Nazi uniform, sweat band around his forehead, goose-steps and heils across the screen like a crazed aerobics instructor, barking commands.

HITLER
Einz! Swei! Dry! Feir! Feel zee burn, feel zee burn!

CUT TO:

108 VIDEO INSERT - SITCOM 108

The channel changes to a black & white 50's sitcom. TWO KIDS on a sidewalk straddle their geeky-looking 50's bikes. One of the kids points o.s. and we see ...

... ANOTHER KID riding by on a bike that looks like nothing ever seen in the 50's... DARRYL'S BMX!

109 INT. ROY'S DEN - DAY 109

DARRYL
My bike! That's my bike!

110 INT. KNABLE UPSTAIRS HALL - OUTSIDE DIANE'S ROOM - DAY 110

Diane stands in the hall with Darryl. SOUNDS of GIGGLING TEENAGE GIRLS and LOUD ROCK MUSIC are heard coming from her bedroom.

DIANE
You saw a bike like yours on TV. So what?

DARRYL
Not a bike <u>like</u> mine. <u>My</u> bike.
(tugs her arm)
Come on--

DIANE
(shakes him off)
Stop it! Leave me alone!

DARRYL
Look, there's something else--I found this on the ground... near the dish.

He produces Helen's singed watch. She inspects it.

(CONTINUED)

110 CONTINUED: 110

DIANE
(a shade of worry creeping in)
Mom's watch.

DARRYL
It stopped at ten-thirty. This is going to sound totally crazy, but I don't think mom and dad went away for the weekend -- at least not to the mountains. I think--

The door flies open, MUSIC BLASTING OUT. CYNDI, a teased blond bimbette, sticks her head out.

CYNDI
C'mon, Diane.
(sees Darryl, turns to girls in room)
Euw! Geek alert! Geek alert!
(goes back in room)

DIANE
(hands watch back to him)
I'm sure it's nothing to worry about. Now leave us ALONE.

Diane goes into her room, slamming the door.

DARRYL
Diane!
(pounds on door)
Diane! Whatever you do, don't go in the backyard, okay? Don't go in the backyard!

111 INT. ICE FISHING SHACK (TV WORLD) - DAY 111

Helen is huddled in the corner next to the lantern, her head turned away, dozing. Roy is on his hands and knees searching for her ring, sifting through the snow. His gloves are off and his fingers are practically blue from the cold. Crowly watches quizzically. *

ROY *
Where is it? Jeeze it's cold. *

He blows on his hands, then brushes away some snow and finds the ring. He sits, looking at it. *

(CONTINUED)

111 CONTINUED: 111

ROY
(wistfully)
When I put this on her finger she said she'd never take it off.

CROWLEY
(smirking)
What kind of guarantee did you make?

CLOSE ON HELEN -- making a smirking expression that says "yeah, answer that one."

CROWLEY
I've seen thousands of your kind in here. You stand there with your pants around your ankles and wonder why things went south on ya. Like you were some innocent bystander.

ROY
(flaring)
What do you know about it.

CROWLEY
What do I know? Pal, you haven't faced failure until you go out on stage and you're NOT FUNNY. You bomb. And you start to sweat. And the audience sees that fear -- and you're through. You lose your bookings. You lose your agent.
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

111 CONTINUED: (2) 111

CROWLEY (cont'd)
And your chick splits.
(beat, smiles grimly)
But I found the solution. 'Ludes. Two thousand milligrams. And now I got cotton mouth 'til the sun goes nova.

Crowley goes to the door, listens for the presence of the wolves.

CROWLEY (cont'd)
The thing is, if you <u>think</u> you're gonna bomb, you're gonna bomb. Last advice from a dead guy. (BEAT) Now if you'll excuse me, I'm heading to warmer Megahertz. *

Crowley opens the door. the wolves have gone. We pick up the narrator in mid - sentence.....

NARRATOR (V.O.)
...the ice wolves have massive jaws and piranha like teeth that can strip a man's bones clean of flesh in minutes.

CROWLEY

All clear. *

He steps out and is blindsided to the ice by a snarling wolf. Roy tries to pull Crowley back in but more wolves jump on him.

CROWLEY
I'm <u>already</u> dead! Save her!

A wolf goes for Roy. He jumps back in the shack, slamming the door, crashing into Helen and the lamp. The ring falls to the ice. The lamp breaks against a wall, quickly spreading fire.

They try scooping up snow from the ice floor, but it's useless against the rapidly spreading fire.

ROY
We gotta get to that conduit!

One side of the shack is now completely engulfed in flames.

HELEN
We're gonna be toast!

She moves for the door, but Roy stops her, getting an idea.

ROY
Wait!

(CONTINUED)

111 CONTINUED: (3) 111

Bracing himself, Roy pushes against the wall opposite the fire... and THE SHACK MOVES ACROSS THE ICE a foot or so!

ROY (cont'd)
We can push it!

With all their might they push against the wall... and the shack, slowly but surely, moves across the ice...

...but the fire is growing too... the burning wall disintegrating, revealing gaping holes... through which we see the glowing red eyes of the wolves.

The roof is now aflame. The burning wall is almost totally gone.

They push with all their remaining strength... finally they're over the conduit, the "snow window," but it's beneath a foot of ice ...

...and the wolves wait for the burning shreds of wall to fall away. Roy finds a hand axe, and begins whacking at the ice... and through the hole we see THE ELECTRONIC SNOW OF THE CONDUIT.

ROY
Go!
(she hesitates)
Wherever it leads can't be any worse than this!

Helen then takes a deep breath and jumps, disappearing ...

... and the alpha wolf leaps into the shack! Roy swings the axe at it trying to keep it away ...

... and he jumps into the hole--but it's too small! He's stuck halfway. Two more wolves jump into the shack. Roy wildly swings the axe at them--and alternately, slashes away at the ice to enlarge the hole. As the alpha wolf lunges at Roy's throat, he slips free and ...

112 INT. CARTOON HOUSE - HALLWAY - MOMENTS LATER 112

... thumps onto a floor in an animated cartoon house, transformed into a cute CARTOON MOUSE. Tiny as a real mouse, he bears a caricaturish resemblance to the real Roy, only now with mouse whiskers, large round ears and a T-shirt.

The style of the cartoon is Chuck Jones/Tex Avery, rich with music stings and funny sound effects.

(CONTINUED)

112 CONTINUED: 112

Roy turns and sees Helen, also a CARTOON MOUSE--trim, sexy in a red dress, black pumps, lipstick and long mascaraed eyelashes.

HELEN
(hands on hips, steamed)
Couldn't be any worse, Roy?

ROY
Helen??
(looks at his own body)
Ohmigod... we're cartoons.

He feels his mouse ears and nose and strums his mouse whiskers. They make a "Sprong! Sprong!" SOUND.

ROY (cont'd)
Boy is this strange.

HELEN
Strange? I'm an animated rodent in black pumps. The word "strange" is somehow lacking!

Roy squeezes his little round nose. It deflates then pops back. Suddenly we hear the SOUND OF FOOTSTEPS approaching... then two pairs of cartoon human feet pass by. A man's black loafers and his wife's high heels. Roy pushes Helen back into the shadows. We hear a DOOR SLAM and they sigh with relief.

ROY
At least we're safe here. No one ever dies in cartoons.

Helen anxiously glances around, feeling vulnerable in this bizarre situation. Roy starts to walk off.

HELEN
Where're you going??

ROY
I've got this funny craving for cheese Danish.

113 EXT. CARTOON SIDEWALK (TV WORLD) 113

Close on the man and wife's feet as they walk to their car.

WIFE (O.S.)
Oh, Ralph, I left some food out. I hope it doesn't attract any mice while we're gone.

(CONTINUED)

113 CONTINUED: 113

HUSBAND (O.S.)
Don't worry. That new device we bought is guaranteed. No rodent stands a chance in there.

114 INT. CARTOON HOUSE - LIVING ROOM 114

Roy and a frightened Helen round a corner.

ROY
I wonder what animated food tastes like.

Roy looks up--his eyes TELESCOPE OUT and his TONGUE DROPS to the floor, reacting to something o.s. Roy has spied a plateful of donuts on the dining room table! And since he doesn't yet have the hang of being a cartoon, he can't get his features to pop back into place.

ROY
(due to his tongue hanging out)
Helf! I'm thtuck!

HELEN
Your eyes were always bigger than your stomach.

She yanks Roy's tongue way out, lets go and his eyes and tongue SNAP BACK painfully into place, knocking him on his butt and ...

... somewhere in the house, TWO EYES BLINK AWAKE, glowing an eerie green.

115 INT. ROY'S DEN - DAY 115

Darryl watching TV. He flips the channel to the Roy and Helen cartoon... and it slowly dawns on him that there is something awfully familiar about these mice.

ON TV the cartoon Roy is climbing up the table leg, a nervous Helen stands below him on the floor, agitated at being abandoned.

HELEN (ON TV)
How can you eat donuts at a time like this??

ROY (ON TV)
What should I do, look for some oat bran? I'm starved.

(CONTINUED)

115 CONTINUED: 115

HELEN (ON TV)
If you don't come down here this instant, I'm leaving.

ROY (ON TV)
(he keeps climbing)
Where you gonna go? Your cartoon mother's house?

HELEN (ON TV)
I'm warning you, Roy!

DARRYL
Roy?

116 INT. CARTOON HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - SAME TIME 116

Roy reaches the top of the table, sees the huge donuts.

ROY
Wow, these things are as big as Buicks.

HELEN
That's it! I said we're through and we're through. I can do better on my own!

Pushed to the limit, Helen stomps off toward door.

HELEN
(talking to herself)
I will get out of this... I-I am not a mouse... I've got an MBA... I'm Helen Knable... I live at 1532 BlueJay Court...

117 INT. ROY'S DEN - DAY 117

Darryl watches, reacting... now he knows.

DARRYL
Mom.

HELEN (ON TV)
I have two lovely children ...
(starts to cry)
... who I may never see again ...

118 INT. CARTOON HOUSE - LIVING ROOM 118

Roy is lifting a donut off the stack when he hears HEAVY FOOTSTEPS approach. KA-BOOM! KA-BOOM! He freezes.

(CONTINUED)

118 CONTINUED: 118

Helen freezes, too. She's right at the swinging door. Suddenly ...

...KKKRASH! The door is swung open with explosive force, smashing Helen into the baseboards. And in -the doorway is ...

ROBOCAT! Half-cat, half-machine, its head and body encased in black, shiny armor. "ROBOCAT" is etched across his steel chestplate. Two serrated ears stick out of the helmet. Through a slot in the face mask, his glowing green cat eyes peer at Roy... who peeks through the donut hole.

ROBOCAT
(loud and mechanized)
Stop! You are trespassing in a human home! The penalty is death!

Roy tries to scram, but when he drops the donut, it falls on him like an inner tube, trapping him. RoboCat draws a pistol from his holster, twirls it gun-fighter-style, then shoots at Roy, obliterating a nearby cruller and splattering chocolate icing all over him. Roy tries to squeeze out of the donut hole.

ROY
My doctor was right. Donuts <u>will</u> be the death of me.

RoboCat shoots again, lopping off a table leg, causing the-leaf of the table to drop. Roy, inside the donut, rolls off to the floor and into the kitchen.

Helen pries herself off the baseboard and runs after him.

119 INT. CARTOON KITCHEN (TV WORLD) 119

Roy smacks into a wall. The donut crumbles, freeing him, but Roy keeps spinning like a top, ricocheting from wall to wall like a Minnesota Fats bank shot.

He spins up a broom handle, propped against the counter... spins across the countertop and crashes into a butcher block knife holder... the knives pop up in the air, disappearing out of frame.

Dizzy from the spinning, Roy weaves drunkenly and the knives rain down, just missing him. Helen zips up the broom handle, joining him.

KA-BOOM! KA-BOOM! RoboCat is approaching.

(CONTINUED)

119 CONTINUED: 119

ROY
(sees a nearby cabinet)
Hide in here.

They slip into the cabinet... and shut the door. INSIDE the cabinet, the walls are smooth, white, metallic.

HELEN
(looks around, realization dawning)
Oh-oh. You know what I think this is?

OUTSIDE the cabinet... RoboCat's steel clawed finger scans buttons on a control panel--WARM, SIMMER, BAKE, CHAR--and presses the ANNIHILATE button.

INSIDE the "cabinet" Roy and Helen suddenly turn beet red and plump up like roasted turkeys.

HELEN
It's a..

ROY AND HELEN
MIIIICROOOOOWAAAAAAVE!!!

Outside the microwave oven, it DINGS! and Roy and Helen shoot out the oven door like red-hot missiles into ...

... RoboCat's oven-mitted paws. He pops the sizzling rodents in his mouth--smoke billows from his ears and he spits them out and they...

... rocket through the air ass-first out of the kitchen into the LIVING ROOM, crashing into a framed print of "AMERICAN GOTHIC."

Robocat walks up to the print and sees Roy's and Helen's faces on the bodies of the old farmer and his wife, wearing their exact pinched expressions.

Appearing to be fooled, RoboCat turns away, then turns back quickly to catch Roy and Helen breathing a sigh. He claws the print into shreds as Roy and Helen scamper off.

120 INT. KNABLE HOUSE - STAIRS - DAY 120

Darryl pulls a complaining Diane towards the den.

DIANE
Would you let go of me!

DARRYL
You gotta see this.

121 INT. ROY'S DEN - DAY 121

Darryl and Diane enter. He points to the TV

DARRYL
There. It's them.

ON THE TV the Roy and Helen mice are in a cartoon bathroom, under the sink. Roy sits atop a can of hairspray, Helen holds a lit match.

ROY (ON TV)
I'm telling ya this'll work. I saw it once on MacGyver.

DIANE
(not a clue)
What are you talking about?

DARRYL
Can't you see? It's mom and dad. In the cartoon!

Diane slowly turns from the TV to her goony brother.

DIANE
Very-funny, puss head.

She exits. Darryl calls after her.

DARRYL
Diane, you've got to believe me!

122 INT. CARTOON BATHROOM (TV WORLD) - DAY 122

As RoboCat's feet come into view, Roy plops his butt down on the nozzle and Helen ignites the spray, making a flamethrower which scorches RoboCat's feet.

Shrieking, he ricochets off ceiling and walls and into the filled tub, cooling his feet. Ahhhhh.

But Roy and Helen push a hair dryer into the tub, electrocuting RoboCat. He YEOWELS as sparks zigzag from his body and Roy and Helen race out.

Slowly, RoboCat stirs. He opens his chestplate, revealing a smoking array of fried circuitry... and a row of switches, labeled LIFE #1, LIFE #2, LIFE #3, on up to LIFE #9. He flips LIFE #2 switch and stirs back into motion. Now he's pissed! He flips up a BEEPING antenna on his head, labeled "RODENT RADAR."

123 INT. SPIKE'S CONTROL ROOM - SAME TIME 123

Bierce enters Spike's office. Spike's chair is turned away.

BIERCE
I see the Knables are still alive.
(no response)
Perhaps you've underestimated their strength. Or overestimated yours.

The chair swivels, revealing Spike. He smiles thinly.

SPIKE
A little warm in here for you, Mr. Bierce? Perhaps you should check out some of our lower environs. Down there, it's hotter than a Rolex in Tijuana. And I can arrange <u>immediate</u> transfer.

CLICK. Spike's remote slips into his hand, unseen by Bierce. He brings his hand up, ready to strike--when the hellphone SHRIEKS. Wetzel picks it up.

SPIKE
Tell him I'm not in--

WETZEL
(listens to phone, then:)
Yes, sir. He's here.

SPIKE
I <u>told</u> you not to--

Wetzel holds the phone out to Bierce.

WETZEL
It's for him.

Not sure of what to expect, Bierce takes the phone.

BIERCE
(into phone)
Yes, sir... yes I did send them to you. Just a few ideas of mine...
(brightens)
You like them?? Sir, thank you...
(looks at Spike)
Oh, he's doing his best... Yes, sir, <u>subtext</u>. My exact feelings. Nice talking with you, sir. Let's do lunch sometime. Ciao.
(holds phone out to Spike)
Held like a word with-you.

(CONTINUED)

123 CONTINUED: 123

SPIKE
(glaring at Bierce, takes phone)
Yes, sir... yes, he is a bright lad...
(looks hard at Bierce)
definitely a man to watch. Goodbye, sir.
(hangs up)

BIERCE
Seems I have friends in low places.

Spike aims his remote at Bierce, wiping the smug look off Bierce's face. Then CLICK--he retracts it into its holster.

123A INT. CARTOON KID'S CLOSET (TV WORLD) 123A

ON a kid's sneaker next to a toy car. Roy and Helen slowly peek up from inside the sneaker. She's hugging him for safety.

ROY
I think we lost him.

She realizes she's holding on to him -- and let's him go. She sits against the inside of the sneaker. Roy looks at her, for the first time noticing how sexy she looks in her outfit.

HELEN
(wondering why he's staring)
What?

ROY
For a mouse... you, um, look pretty sexy.

HELEN
(rolls her eyes)
What a girl has to do to get noticed.
(pointedly)
Too bad you didn't like the way I looked when I was human.

ROY
I always did.

HELEN
News to me.

ROY
They look at each other. Their eyes hold.

ROY
I'm sorry.

Suddenly they HEAR RoboCat approaching. Roy ducks down.

124 INT. CARTOON KID'S BEDROOM (TV WORLD) 124

At a closet, RoboCat's beeper is going crazy--he's found them!

ROBOCAT
Surrender. Come out with--

The door flies open and out zooms a remote-controlled toy car carrying Roy and Helen. The car lays rubber through RoboCat's legs and swerves out the door.

125 INT. CARTOON LIVING ROOM (TV WORLD) 125

In the car, Roy in the front seat steers with the remote control toggle switch. Helen, in back, holds onto a big lumpy sack.

RoboCat pursues as they race around a table leg... underneath the couch and out the other side... dodging RoboCat's GUN BLASTS.

Roy jams the toggle switch to and fro as Helen empties the bag behind her...dumping dozens of marbles onto the floor... which RoboCat slips on and falls, breaking off his mouse antenna.

Suddenly Helen sees a SNOW WINDOW in a mouse hole ahead. Escape!

HELEN
Look, Roy! Turn! Turn!

126 INT. CARTOON LIVING ROOM (TV WORLD) 126

Roy turns, the car fishtails and Helen bounces out, sliding through the tiny mouse hole of TV snow--and she disappears!

ROY
(not looking where he's going)
Helen, waaaaaaaaaaaiit!

The car sails through an open door and hurtles down the basement steps. A LOUD CRASH is heard o.s. FADE OUT.

FADE IN. Roy, looking a little worse for wear, peeks around the basement door corner and sees-RoboCat boarding up the mouse hole with hammer and nails.

ROY
This is one clever pussy.

FLIP WIPE TO:

Setting a trap, Roy squirts superglue over a patch of kitchen linoleum. He runs behind a table leg and watches ...

126 CONTINUED: 126

... as RoboCat walks onto the superglued spot and his feet stick. He can't move! Roy, ecstatic, runs to boarded up mouse hole with an electric drill and begins drilling his way to freedom ...

...until KAAA-BOOOM! KAAA-BOOOM! Roy turns to see RoboCat walking toward him, huge planks of flooring stuck to the bottom of his feet. Roy drops the mixer and scampers away.

FLIP WIPE TO:

RoboCat is finishing bricking up the mouse hole with QuickDry Cement. Roy tiptoes up and inserts the cat's tail between two bricks. The cement makes a squeaking, hardening SOUND.

Roy thumbs his nose at RoboCat, who spots him and starts to give chase... but he's not moving--his tail is stuck fast into the wall. Finally he breaks loose, bringing the whole brick wall flying right behind him.

RoboCat chases Roy, the wall hurtles closer and closer behind the cat, until Roy turns a corner and the brick wall finally catches up and crushes RoboCat into the opposite wall.

FLIP WIPE TO:

RoboCat's claw flips on his LIFE #3 switch.

FADE OUT.

FADE IN:

RoboCat rivets a thick impenetrable steel plate over the mouse hole with a pneumatic drill. Roy sees this and frowns.

ROY
I've watched enough cartoons. How would an animated character handle this?

He thinks hard and a LIGHT BULB clicks on over his head. He looks up, getting a bright idea.

He hops to a nearby Yellow Pages and begins leafing through the pages. He finds what he's looking for and hops to a nearby phone and begins punching in a number.

ROY
This'll put a permanent crease in his shorts.

(CONTINUED)

126 CONTINUED: (2) 126

FLIP WIPE TO:

DING-DONG! Doorbell rings. RoboCat goes to the door.

ROBOCAT
(through closed door, warily)
Identify yourself.

VOICE (O.S.)
Catnipgram.

Happily, RoboCat opens the door and comes face to face with ...

ROBODOG! Half robot, half doberman. It growls fiercely and chases RoboCat. Roy takes cover as a CACOPHONY OF SOUND AND FURY ERUPTS.

127 EXT. CARTOON HOUSE (TV WORLD) 127

We hear RIPPING, SMASHING, CRUNCHING and SCREECHING as the house shakes, quakes and explodes in a cloud of smoke.

DISSOLVE TO:

Roy peeks out from under couch, seeing sky. The house has been demolished. Nothing is left standing but the brick chimney--then it, too, crumbles. To his horror, Roy then sees ...

... the steel plate still riveted to a tattered portion of wall. He runs up to it and tries in vain to pull it down, but it won't budge.

ROY
I'll never get outta here!

He puts his head in his hands. We HEAR A CREAK, the steel plate tips over, crushing Roy and uncovering the mouse hole of TV SNOW.

Long beat... then a SQUEAKING SOUND... as Roy crawls out from under the steel slab, his body paper-thin. He holds his nose and blows, inflating back to normal size.

ROY
(to audience a la Porky Pig)
E-deeb-e-deeb-e-deeb-uh-that's all folks!

Accompanied by the LOONY TUNES END MUSICAL SIGNATURE, Roy zips through the SNOW WINDOW. *

128 INT. ROY'S DEN - DAY 128

Darryl watching this on TV.

DARRYL
Where'd he go??

129 INT. PRIVATE DETECTIVE OFFICE - DAY 129

Roy suddenly finds himself in a small, seedy office. The digs of a not-too-successful private eye. The film is BLACK AND WHITE. The style, film noir.

He spins around in his chair. He's wearing a sleeveless undershirt and a fedora. His-eyes fix on the wall calendar, AUGUST, 1940. A bottle of rye whiskey sits on his scarred desk, along with two glasses. Next to it, a BUSINESS CARD reading: ROY KNABLE PRIVATE INVESTIGATOR, "NO JOB TOO DANGEROUS."

He breathes a sigh of relief, realizing he's back to human form.

ROY
I'm a man.

WOMAN'S VOICE
Lucky for me.

On the couch is the hottest dame this side of Veronica Lake. Beautiful. Redhead. Sultry. Built. VELMA ALLESANDRO. Wearing nothing but a black slip, she is having a post-coital cigarette. Roy takes a gander, his eyes popping.

VELMA
That was real swell, big guy. You been practicin' without me?

ROY
Hey--you're--you're not Helen.

VELMA
That the cheap floosie you been two-timing me with? What's the matter ...

She arches a shapely leg, pulling up her slip coquettishly.

VELMA (cont'd)
This-ain't <u>enough</u> for ya?

Roy gawks at the leg. She pulls the slip up and up and ...

(CONTINUED)

129 CONTINUED: 129

ROY
(raising a hand to stop her)
Don't do that.

VELMA
You didn't say that a few minutes ago.

ROY
I wasn't here a few minutes ago.

VELMA
(drags on her cigarette)
Honey, you were here and a half.
(pats couch)
And I'm hungry for seconds.

ROY
(stands, incensed)
All right, that's it. I've been body-slammed, microwaved and almost torn apart by wolves. I'm through providing the entertainment--

Roy looks down and notices he's not wearing any pants. Just brightly striped boxer shorts.

ROY (cont'd)
Oh fine. Where are my pants?

She stalks him, like a cat on the prowl, Roy backing away.

ROY (cont'd)
I do have pants, don't I? Or is this some kind of film noir-detective-sex romp?
(backed against the desk)
You're not even real.

VELMA
(feigning hurt)
How can you say that? Aren't my feelings real?
(closing in)
Aren't my lips real?
(indicating her breasts)
How about these.

Roy looks at her wonderful breasts and the line between what's real and what's not starts to lose its significance.

VELMA
This Helen dame--she love you?

(CONTINUED)

129 CONTINUED: (2) 129

ROY
(eyes on Velma's cleavage, babbling)
Not-not-not anymore. Love takes work. I got lazy.

She grabs him and plants the juiciest kiss in film history on him, spread-eagling him across the desk.

VELMA
Does Helen kiss like that?

ROY
(dizzy from the kiss)
A Hoover doesn't kiss like that.

The intercom on the desk buzzes.

VOICE OVER INTERCOM
Mr. Knable, Mr. Allesandro is here to see you.

VELMA
Oh-oh. My husband.

She gets off him, quickly gathering her clothes and purse.

ROY
(regrouping, angry)
Ohhhhh. So that's the plot. Jealous husband bursts in--

Velma finds his pants under the couch and tosses them to him.

ROY
Finds us together and--

VELMA
Pumps you full of lead.

Roy realizes she has a point. She ducks into the closet and Roy jams on his pants just as GUIDO ALLESANDRO enters the room like a wrecking ball. Big, mean, dangerous.

ALLESANDRO
What about my wife, Knable!

ROY
I can explain everything--

ALLESANDRO
I paid you good dough to find out who she's chippin' around with. Who is it!

(CONTINUED)

129 CONTINUED: (3) 129

ROY
(tries the tough-guy Bogie snarl)
Look you--number one, I'm not a detective. Number two, you're a fictitious character--

Allesandro puts his huge paw around Roy's neck--and his tough-guy impersonation vanishes.

ALLESANDRO
You take me for a sap? Talk, dick!

ROY
(starting to choke)
Okay, okay--I got something... I just need a little more time.

ALLESANDRO
Have it tonight... or else.

Allesandro lets him go and exits, slamming out of there. Roy sits shakily in his chair. Velma comes out of the closet, sits on the desk next to him and pours some rye into both glasses.

VELMA
He's not a bad guy if you get to know him.

ROY
Sure. Let's go bowling sometime.

She tosses back her rye in one gulp. Roy also needs the solace of stiff drink. Mimicking her, he tosses his drink back, loses balance and falls head over heels out of frame with a CRASH.

130 INT. SPIKE'S CONTROL ROOM 130

ON the Scoreboard. All "recruits" have been killed off --except the Knables, who edge closer to Redemption. Spike walks in front of the board, brooding. Wetzel approaches warily.

WETZEL
Sir, great news! Your new class of recruits, we've taken possession of <u>all</u> of them ...
(lowers voice)
except, uh, two, sir.

SPIKE
I know that you pustulating putz! They've just been incredibly lucky is all! Do you understand!! *

(CONTINUED)

130 CONTINUED: 130

BIERCE (O.S.)
Have they.

Spike whirls to see Bierce.

BIERCE (cont'd)
The strain of this job must be tremendous. Ever thought about taking a vacation? You know, kicking back, letting someone else take the burden off your shoulders for awhile.

SPIKE
Someone else. You?

BIERCE
I'm flattered you'd even think that I could fill your shoes. But, I'm ready to try, sir.

SPIKE
Let me tell you one thing, Mr. Bierce.
(grabs him by the collar)
I've chewed up dozens of your kind. Ambitious little film-school punks who think they can drop in, stab a few backs, and wind up on top. But let me warn you, Mr. Bierce, when it comes to back-stabbing, I wrote the MANUAL!

Spike releases Bierce. They hold looks. Then Bierce smiles.

BIERCE
All the same... if you need any help, I'll be around.

Bierce saunters away--much to Spike's ire.

131 INT. PRIVATE DETECTIVE OFFICE (TV WORLD) - SUNSET 131

The rays of a dying sun cast a slotted pattern through the blinds. Velma, now fully dressed, picks up her handbag. Roy, wearing a white button down and loud tie, watches her warily.

VELMA
See you tonight.

ROY
Don't bet on it.

She slaps him. Hard.

(CONTINUED)

131 CONTINUED: 131

VELMA
I'm lousy at rejection.

She sashays to the door, blows him a kiss and exits.

ROY (V.O.)
Whatta dame!

He realizes that he can hear his own v.o. He tests it ...

ROY (cont'd V.O.)
Hello... testing... testing...
(shrugs, continues V.O., picks up business card, reading it)
"Roy Knable, Private Dick." I liked the sound of that. Maybe Helen was right. I'd played the safe route, peddling faucets all these years 'cause I didn't have the guts to go out on my own.

His eyes fall on a .38 in a shoulder holster hanging on the coat rack. Drawn to it, he gingerly picks up the holster amd starts putting it on. But not knowing how to, he puts it on upside down and the gun falls out, FIRES and the bullet breaks the window. During this we hear:

ROY (cont'd, V.O.)
So now I had the chance to see what kind of man I was. Maybe I'd wind up on a cold slab in the county morgue, but what the hell... I had to find Helen. I'd gotten her into this jam and I was going to get her out.

Finally he gets it on right and dons the trench coat. Everything feels right. For good measure, he positions the fedora at a rakish angle. Looks into a mirror.

ROY
(sneers, tough-guylike)
"No job too dangerous."

132 INT. ROY'S DEN - DAY 132

Darryl changes the channel to see Roy as the detective.

DARRYL
Dad!

Darryl HEARS THE SOUNDS OF GIRLS DOING CHEERS coming from the backyard. He reacts, horrified.

133 EXT. KNABLE BACKYARD - DAY 133

Diane and her four friends are lined up in a row, practicing high school cheerleader routines -- about twenty feet from the dish! Darryl dashes out the backdoor.

DARRYL
Get away from the dish!

He runs at the girls to shoo them away. Diane grabs him.

DIANE
What is with you? Get lost!

She shoves him away. The other girls AD LIB insults and line up for another routine.

Darryl hears a FAINT CLICK and his eyes go to the dish--it's starting to swivel slowly toward the girls. His mind racing, he scans the yard, his eyes falling on a GARDEN HOSE.

He runs to it, turns it on full blast and sprays the girls. Squealing, they scatter, away from the dish. Soaked and furious, Diane and friends charge after Darryl, who thumbs his nose at them and races into the house, locking the back door.

The girls give up the chase, aiming angry complaints at Diane.

CYNDI
If this sweater is ruined I'm sending you the bill! *

The others agree and start walking off.

DIANE
Wait! It's not my fault my brother's a creep!

134 EXT. SIDEWALK OUTSIDE ROY'S OFFICE (TV WORLD) - NIGHT 134

With a hint of a swagger in his step, Roy comes down the steps of the office building. A GOOD LOOKING DAME passes. Roy tips the brim of his hat--she slaps him--and continues on. Roy feels his jaw, wondering what his character did to deserve this.

135 INT. ROY'S DEN - DAY 135

Darryl lies in wait behind the door, waiting for ...

DIANE
(bursting in, fuming)
Darryl! DARRYL!
(sees him)
You're pizza topping!

(CONTINUED)

135 CONTINUED: 135

She comes at him, Darryl is backed to the wall--

DARRYL
Wait-wait! Mom and dad are here.

DIANE
(stops)
They're home?

DARRYL
Not... exactly. Look.

Darryl points to the TV where...

136 VIDEO INSERT - ROY PASSES NEWSSTAND 136

... ON TV Roy passes a NEWSSTAND, walks a few steps--and freezes. He hurries back and grabs a newspaper. On the front page, above a photo of Helen is a banner headline: "CLASSY DAME VANISHES."

ROY (ON TV)
Helen!

The photo caption reads, "LAST SEEN AT CLUB SEIDENBAUM."

ROY (V.O.)
Club Seidenbaum... the name rang a bell.

137 INT. ROY'S DEN - DAY 137

DARRYL
See? That's dad!

DIANE
(not buying it)
That's not dad.

138 EXT. DARK DESERTED STREET (TV WORLD) - NIGHT 138

A pair of woman's feet in high heels, run down the wet sidewalk. A CAR approaches. The feet run and duck into a dark doorway as a 1940 Packard slowly drives by... and turns the corner.

We now see the face of the hiding woman. Helen. She has platinum blond hair and wears a white, full-length fur over a revealing black gown with radical plunging V neckline. She carries a strange looking parcel wrapped in newspaper, she peeks out of the doorway.

139 INT. ROY'S DEN - DAY 139

Diane stares at the TV, in shock.

DIANE
Mom? That looks like mom!

DARRYL
It is mom. Diane, that's what I've been trying to tell you. OUR PARENTS ARE TRAPPED IN TELEVISION!

DIANE
Oh. Wow.

140 VIDEO INSERT - HELEN SCURRIES DOWN SIDEWALK 140

ON TV, Helen scurries down the sidewalk away from us, her footsteps echoing in the night.

141 EXT. CLUB SEIDENBAUM (TV WORLD) - NIGHT 141

A taxi pulls away, leaving Roy at the curb. A NEON SIGN blinks: "CLUB SEIDENBAUM." COUPLES in evening wear enter.

142 INT. CLUB SEIDENBAUM (TV WORLD) - NIGHT 142

Very posh. COUPLES dance cheek-to-cheek to an ORCHESTRA. Roy enters. A couple of beefy tuxedoed bouncers, mob TORPEDOS, eye him coldly.

SEIDENBAUM (O.S.)
Knable, that you?

Murray Seidenbaum, cigar in his mouth, two gorgeous BIMBOS on his arms, approaches.

SEIDENBAUM
(puts out his hand for a shake)
Murray Seidenbaum. We met once at the driving range. I borrowed your wedge.

Roy's mouth drops in shock--a kindred soul! He grabs hold of Seidenbaum's hand, pumping it.

ROY
Seidenbaum! You're trapped in here, too?!

(CONTINUED)

142 CONTINUED: 142

SEIDENBAUM
(laughs, indicates his bimbos)
Does this look like I'm trapped?
(gestures to the place)
Sure beats the crap outta reality, eh?
(to the bouncers, who hang near)
He's okay, boys. Friend of mine.
(to Roy)
Come on, I'll buy you a drink. So, what's your situation here? Lemme guess ...
(sizes him up)
Low rent gumshoe, right? Stuck in loserville. The ol' case of art imitating life?
(laughs)

143 EXT. KNABLE FRONT DOOR - NIGHT 143

The front door opens and TWO POLICEMEN walk out, followed by Diane. She runs in front of them, backpedaling as they walk to their car. Darryl follows, knowing it's futile.

DIANE
... yes... the note says they went away--and they did. But, like, not really. They're on TV. I mean <u>in</u> TV. So, like they're here, but they're not <u>here</u> here.

COP
Look, kid, we don't have time for games. If they're not back in 24 hours, file a missing persons report.

The cops get in their car.

DARRYL
Nice going. I told you they wouldn't believe us.

144 INT. KNABLE KITCHEN - NIGHT 144

The dish is seen through the kitchen window.

DARRYL
Obviously we're dealing with something of a supernatural nature here, Diane. This--
(gestures to the dish)
--<u>thing</u> didn't come from Radio Shack.

144 CONTINUED: 144

DIANE
Yeah, so... ? C'mon, you're the smart one. Think of something!

DARRYL
(paces, cogitating)
Okay, okay... what goes into the dish winds up on TV. My bike... our parents...
(idea hits)
Follow me.

He flies out, followed fast by his sister.

145 INT. CLUB SEIDENBAUM (TV WORLD) - NIGHT 145

A CIGARETTE GIRL walks between tables. Only she's not selling cigarettes. In her tray are handguns of every caliber.

CIGARETTE GIRL
Thirty-eights, forty-fives, twenty-twos. Thirty-eights, forty-fives, twenty-twos.

CUSTOMER AT A TABLE
I'll take a thirty-eight.

CIGARETTE GIRL
Would you like a silencer with that, sir?

Customer nods and the girl gives him a thirty-eight and a silencer. CAMERA MOVES past her to... *

...a booth where Seidenbaum, Roy and the two bimbos are sitting. The brunette is hanging over Roy, nibbling on his ear.

SEIDENBAUM
I made a special deal. Waived the free trial. I don't ever want to get outta here. Outside I was Murray the doormat. In here, I'm Boss Seidenbaum, king of the hill.

ROY
(re: the brunette's nibble)
Would you <u>please</u> stop that.

SEIDENBAUM
For the first time in my life, I got it all. Money, power--

(CONTINUED)

145 CONTINUED: 145

ROY
(she continues to nibble)
Enough.

SEIDENBAUM
--broads. Sure, sure, I had to sell my soul to get it ...
(raises his glass to toast)
... here's to small sacrifices. So what brings you here, Knable?

Roy lays the newspaper, open to Helen's photo, in front of him.

ROY
I'm looking for my wife.

SEIDENBAUM
What for? I ditched my ball and chain five channels ago. She met the business end of a fifty-ton reptile. And boy, am I gonna miss dried meatloaf.

ROY
Paper says she was last seen here.

SEIDENBAUM
(tone abruptly darkens)
Uh-huh. And she happened to leave very suddenly... with something of mine in her possession. A small yet extremely valuable statue ...
(pauses for dramatic effect)
The Burmese Budgie.

ROY
The Burmese Budgie?? Are you saying my wife--

SEIDENBAUM
(pounds table)
--stole it from me! Yes, Knable! Your wife is a thief.

ROY
Now wait a minute--

Roy stands and the two nearby Torpedos quickly grab their guns and point them at Roy's head.

SEIDENBAUM
I wouldn't make any sudden moves in here, Knable. Now, get outta my club. I gotta dress code.

(CONTINUED)

145 CONTINUED: (2) 145

Roy grabs the newspaper and his hat.

SEIDENBAUM (cont'd)
And I want my bird back. You better find your wife... before we do.

Roy gives Seidenbaum a hard look and walks off, passing the Cigarette Girl.

CIGARETTE GIRL
Excuse me, Mr. Knable?

ROY
(recoils, wary of being slapped)
Yes?

CIGARETTE GIRL
You have a telephone call. You can take it over there.
(pointing to an alcove)

She SLAPS HIM and continues on, without missing a beat. Roy feels his sore jaw, goes to the alcove and picks up the phone. On the wall in b.g. is a poster touting "TUMOR ULTRA-LIGHTS CIGARETTES."

ROY
(into phone)
Hello?

HELEN'S VOICE (filtered)
Roy, it's me.

ROY
Helen! Thank God you're okay! Where are you? *

HELEN'S VOICE (filtered)
Listen carefully, Roy. Go to a place your doctor forbids.

ROY
My doctor forbids? What do you--

HELEN'S VOICE (filtered)
Hurry, Roy.

CLICK. Roy hangs up, confused about the cryptic message.

ON SEIDENBAUM as he, too, hangs up a phone. He's been listening in. He smiles and nods at his men ...

146 EXT. CLUB SEIDENBAUM (TV WORLD) - NIGHT 146

ROY
(exits club)
Taxi!

A taxi screeches to a stop at the curb. As he's about to enter it, Velma Allesandro appears, stopping him.

VELMA
My husband found out about us. He's gunning for you, big guy.

ROY
Terrific. That's all I need.

He opens the taxi door to enter and Velma grabs his arm.

VELMA
So that's it? The brush off? Why you dirty--

She swings to slap him. But he's expecting it this time and he ducks. She swings with the open hand and he ducks again.

VELMA
Duck this.

She slams her fist into his stomach and he collapses in a fetal lump in the taxi backseat.

ROY (O. S.)
(falsetto)
Drive.

The taxi drives off. Shortly thereafter a black car pulls away from the curb, following.

147 INT. DIANE'S BEDROOM - NIGHT 147

Darryl starts dismantling Diane's boom box stereo. She gasps.

DIANE
Hey, not my stereo!

DARRYL
I need some parts.
(cutting off her protest)
DIANE! Which do you want? A boom box or parents?!

Mmmm. Tough decision. Parents, I guess.

(CONTINUED)

147 CONTINUED: 147

DARRYL (cont'd)
Now go down and watch 'em. We can't lose track of them.

She goes to the door, stops, sorry she doubted him. *

DIANE
Sorry, okay? *

They share a look. Smile. A brother and sister coming together. * *

148 EXT. CITY STREET (TV WORLD) - NIGHT 148

The taxi drives down the dark street.

ROY (V.O.)
I was on the dark streets of a nightmare world ...

149 INT. TAXI (TV WORLD) - NIGHT 149

Roy is searching the passing scene for anything that would tie into Helen's cryptic message.

ROY (V.O.)
...caught in a web of intrigue and plot twists. Where was my wife? Why did she want me to go to a place my doctor forbids? And the big question I kept turning over and over in my mind...what the hell was a Burmese Budgie?
(see's something o.s.)
But then I saw it!

He shouts Stop! The taxi slams to a halt and Roy flies forward, smashing his skull on the taxi meter.

150 EXT. NEON SIGN (TV WORLD) - NIGHT 150

The blinking sign reads "GREASY SPOON."

151 EXT. CITY STREET (TV WORLD) - NIGHT 151

ROY (V.O.)
(climbing out of taxi)
My hunch told me this had to be the place.

152 INT. GREASY SPOON (TV WORLD) - NIGHT 152

The COOK and a lone CUSTOMER in a booth, reading a newspaper, are the only inhabitants of this disgusting eatery.

152 CONTINUED: 152

Roy enters, cooly surveying the scene. He makes his way to the counter, slipping and sliding on the greasy floor.

ROY (V.O.)
It was greasy, alright ...

The cook turns, revealing an incredibly greasy apron.

ROY (V.O.)
The cook looked like held been spending nights under a leaky Ford.
(shows cook newspaper photo)
I showed him Helen's photo.

COOK
Yeah, she was in here. Ordered a bran muffin.
(rolls his eyes)
Screwy dame. Left this for you.

The cook gives Roy a folded piece of paper, which, unfolded reveals a handwritten message: "B-7 ON THE JUKEBOX."

Roy slips a nickel in the jukebox and presses B-7. The song "Slow Boat to China" plays. After a few beats of the song, a smile plays across Roy's face.

ROY (V.O.)
I was getting good at this detective game. Damn good. Slow boat to China could only mean one thing.

The customer in the booth lowers his newspaper, a suspicious glint in his eyes. Roy gives an order to the cook ...

ROY (V.O.)
I ordered a burger and a double shot of fries ...

153 EXT. CITY STREET (TV WORLD) - NIGHT 153

Carrying a sack dripping with grease, Roy dashes to the taxi.

ROY (V.O. cont'd)
...and blew that popstand fast.

154 EXT. FOG SHROUDED DOCKS (TV WORLD) - NIGHT 154

Trench coat collar pulled up, Roy leans against a pier piling. The fog is pea-soup thick.

154 CONTINUED: 154

ROY (V.O.)
I cooled my heels on the docks for a awhile. No Helen. Slow Boat to China ...
(starts walking)
Maybe I'd taken a wrong turn. Maybe ...

Roy disappears and we hear a SPLASH.

ROY (V.O.)
(talking underwater)
I was getting in way over my head.

155 INT. TAXI - NIGHT (TV WORLD) 155

The taxi moves along a city street. A soaked Roy pulls a couple of wriggling fish from inside his coat.

ROY (V.O.)
Fine detective I was. Maybe Seidenbaum was right. I was a two-bit gumshoe stuck in Loserville.
(sees something o.s. reacts)
But then, sometimes even losers get lucky.

156 EXT. JUNK SHOP (TV WORLD) - NIGHT 156

The taxi stops in front of the shop. Sign reads: "JUNK" OPEN 24-HOURS.

ROY (V.O.)
Junk. Isn't that what you call a slow boat in China?

157 INT. JUNK SHOP (TV WORLD) - NIGHT 157

Roy enters the dimly lit, dusty shop. An OLD CRONE behind the counter looks up briefly from her movie magazine. Roy pokes around the shelves full of an odd collection of stuff.

ROY (V.O.)
The key to Helen's whereabouts had to be here.

He spies a small music box--the kind he's given Helen all these years. He opens the lid and it plays a beautiful little TUNE. *

SPIKE
Hey, shamus. *

Roy whirls and sees SPIKE'S IMAGE in a dusty old mirror. *

(CONTINUED)

157 CONTINUED: 157

ROY
Spike!

SPIKE
I have a little proposition. A limited-time offer, if you will.

ROY
I'm not interested in any more of your "offers." You tricked me!

SPIKE
Now Roy, listen. In about three hours your free trial is up. What do you have to go back to? Helen doesn't want you anymore, Roy. What's left? A dead-end job in a dead-end life. But in here, you can be somebody, Roy. Look what I did for Seidenbaum.

Roy thinks about it. Spike indicates a nearby bureau.

SPIKE
Open the top drawer.

Roy opens the drawer and finds a contract and a pen.

SPIKE
An irrevocable waiver. Sign it and I'll put you into the scenario of your choice. What do you want? Money? Power? Donuts? They're all yours, Roy. Just sign on the dotted line.

Roy looks at the contract... thinks about it... then looks at the little music box. He tears the contract in two. *

ROY
Go to hell.

SPIKE
Where you'll be joining me VERY SOON!

Roy hits the mirror and it spins rapidly on its axis, Spike's image FADING. Now Roy looks about the shop ...

ROY (V.O.)
Okay, think Roy, think. A China boat is a junk...and..
(gaze falls on something o.s.)
a junk is a ...

We see what he's looking at--a chipped china gravy boat. Bingo.

(CONTINUED)

157 CONTINUED: (2) 157

ROY (V.O.)
... china boat.

Roy lifts the lid and finds a HOTEL KEY to Room 23 at the Chandler Hotel. He picks it up, his confidence building. *

158 EXT. JUNK SHOP (TV WORLD) - NIGHT 158

He exits the shop... but the taxi is gone! And suddenly from out of a dark alley steps one of Seidenbaum's Torpedos. A hand holding a blackjack clubs Roy from behind...and he crumples to the pavement. * *

ROY (V.O.)
Suddenly the world caved in and things got black...
(echo)
very... very... black.

159 EXT. SIGN "CHANDLER HOTEL" (TV WORLD) - NIGHT 159

160 INT. HOTEL ROOM - CLOSE SHOT - BURMESE BUDGIE (TV WORLD) - 160

FULL BACK from the EBONY BIRD to reveal Helen nervously pacing the room. She looks smashing in her revealing gown. There is a KNOCK on the door. She tenses, going to the door.

HELEN
Roy?... Roy is that you?

Suddenly the door is busted in... and there stand the Torpedos.

161 EXT. ALLEY (TV WORLD) - NIGHT 161

TIGHT on a moaning Roy, laying in the alley, just coming to.

ROY (V.O.)
(echo)
... ohhhh... my head felt like a blocked punt... where was I?... and why was I wearing a fur coat?... then I realized it wasn't a fur coat... it was...

PULL BACK as Roy sees that a half dozen black alley cats are nestled around him for warmth.

ROY
Cats!

The cats scatter. Roy sniffs himself. Phew! He smells terrible. He manages to get to his feet--then remembers ...

(CONTINUED)

161 CONTINUED: 161

ROY
The key!
(searches pockets, comes up empty.)
Seidenbaum.

162 INT. CLUB SEIDENBAUM (TV WORLD) - NIGHT 162

Helen is hustled by a Torpedo to Seidenbaum's booth. The other Torpedo hands Seidenbaum the Burmese Budgie.

SEIDENBAUM
Nice work, boys.

The Torpedos exit the scene. Seidenbaum eyes Helen, liking what he sees.

SEIDENBAUM (cont'd)
Glad you could join me, Mrs. Knable.

HELEN
I didn't have much choice.

SEIDENBAUM
Drink?

He motions to a waiter, who pours the tense Helen a glass of champagne.

HELEN
Where's my husband?

SEIDENBAUM
He'll be around. You know, I could do a lot...
(puts his hand on hers)
for a classy doll like you.

Revulsed, Helen takes her hand away. Seidenbaum shrugs, lifts the Budgie, caressing it in reverence.

SEIDENBAUM (cont'd)
I like beautiful things, Mrs. Knable. Women...
(eyes her)
and fine art.

He crashes the statue down on his desk, breaking it... revealing an item that was hidden inside: A TV REMOTE CONTROLLER!

(CONTINUED)

162 CONTINUED: 162

SEIDENBAUM (cont'd)
Brought my remote in with me. It gets hot here--bam, I'm on another channel. 'Course, that's why you took it, eh? But one thing I don't get. You had your chance. Why didn't you use it to scram outta here -- instead of waiting around for that schnook husband of yours?

HELEN
All right -- so he's not the greatest. If he was I wouldn't be stuck in this godforsaken place.
(beat, softens)
But he sacrificed a lot for me... worked two jobs to put me through school. I owe him a lot... I couldn't just leave him here alone.

SEIDENBAUM
But he wasn't alone. The redhead at the bar.

Seidenbaum nods to Velma who is drinking alone at the bar. She's had quite a few.

SEIDENBAUM (cont'd)
I heard she and your hubby are... how can I put this... cozy bunkmates?

HELEN
I don't believe you.

SEIDENBAUM
Yeah, it's got me scratchin' my head, too. What a dish like that would see in a sap like him.

Suddenly there is a loud commotion at the door. Helen and Seidenbaum look to see ...

... Roy, totally disheveled and smelling of cat piss, trying to push his way into the club past the Torpedo who cold-cocked him outside the junk shop.

TORPEDO
You're not comin' in here!

ROY
Oh yeah?

Roy slugs the torpedo, knocking him flat. Roy shakes his fist in pain, mumbles "ow." Seidenbaum enters the scene.

162 CONTINUED: (2) 162

SEIDENBAUM
Well, look who showed up.
(gets a whiff of Roy, reacts)
Jeezes, Knable -- you been sleeping in a cat box?

ROY
What'd you do with my--

Roy stops dead as Helen enters scene.

HELEN
(with an edge)
Hello, Roy.

ROY
Helen! You're alright!
(notices her sexy outfit)
You look--you look... terrific.

HELEN
Oh really? You sure you don't want me to button up?

VELMA (O.S.)
(breathily)
Hi, big guy.

Roy turns, sees her and cringes.

VELMA
(kisses him on ear)
Let's make up, okay?

HELEN
You've been having some fun in here, haven't you, Roy.

ROY
Helen, I hardly know this woman. *
(reaches into his pocket, brings out music box from junk shop)
Look--it's a little late, but happy *
anniversary. *

He hands her the music box. She's totally surprised by the *
gift. *

HELEN *
Roy-- *

(CONTINUED)

162 CONTINUED: (3) 162

VELMA
Why you lousy... you never give me gifts!

She slaps Roy.

ROY
(feeling stinging cheek)
This is starting to piss me off.

VOICE (O.S.)
(thundering)
So!

Guido Allesandro, holding his overcoat, stands across the room.

ALLESANDRO
You're the one! I'll teach you to play footsie with Velma!

He brings a TOMMY GUN from under his overcoat and FIRES -- SHATTERING the music box in Helen's hand.

With that, EVERYONE IN THE CLUB, customers, waiters, band members, whip out <u>their</u> guns and it's a huge shoot-out free for all.

Roy and Helen dive for cover as SPRAYS OF BULLETS riddle the chairs, walls and tables.

Behind an upturned table, Seidenbaum grabs his remote just as BULLETS rake through the table, hitting him. He jerks in pain and the remote flies from his grasp to the dance floor.

Roy and Helen crawl the few feet to the mortally wounded Seidenbaum.

SEIDENBAUM
All I wanted was to be the big shot for once. That's all ...
(gestures toward his remote)
Take my remote and get outta here. You two still got a chance of making it together.

He dies. Helen sees Seidenbaum's remote on the dance floor.

HELEN
There it is!

Helen rises to go after it -- and Roy pulls her down.

162 CONTINUED: (4) 162

ROY
This is my job.

Roy gets his gun out, fumbles with it, drops it. He picks it up, shares a look with Helen. Gathers himself. Then runs for the remote through the upturned tables and chairs, the tommy gun's THUNDEROUS SHOTS barely missing him. Roy FIRES his gun in return, not coming close to hitting Allesandro.

Helen watches, terrified that he's going to be hit.

HELEN
Roy!

Roy scoops up the remote -- and runs back to Helen as BULLETS tear up the dance floor coming closer and closer to him -- and he dives behind the table where Helen is. She gapes at him with astonished admiration.

ROY
Piece a cake.

BULLETS rake the table above them. Roy presses the channel changer and--

163 EXT. PARIS STREET (TV WORLD) - NIGHT 163

--they appear on a cobblestone street, the HOOVES of horses bearing down on them. They jerk out of the way and the hooves trample the remote -- followed by the wheels of a COACH which crushes it flat.

164 INT. ROY'S DEN - DAY 164

Her parents have disappeared from the channel Diane was watching.

DIANE
Ohmigod, I lost them.
(rapidly hitting remote, changing channels)
Mom, dad, where are you??

165 EXT. PARIS STREET (TV WORLD) - NIGHT 165

Roy and Helen get to their feet. The setting is Paris circa 1790's during the Reign of Terror. Helen is dressed as a painted prostitute. Roy is a buxom wench, a not bad-looking one at that.

HELEN
Roy! You've got tits!

(CONTINUED)

165 CONTINUED: 165

Roy looks down, thumps his "breasts" as if they were melons.

ROY
Whew! They're not mine.

Suddenly a tumbrel carrying FRENCH NOBLES to the guillotine bears down at them and they have to jump out of the way. BYSTANDERS JEER at the nobles as they pass.

A PEASANT WITH A CRUTCH hails them from an alley.

PEASANT WITH CRUTCH
Psssssst! Hey Knables! C'mere!

Roy and Helen approach the man. He steps from the shadows--it's Crowley (from the arctic scene), now missing an arm and leg.

CROWLEY
Nice disguise. But your hooters are out of whack.

Crowley adjusts his breasts and Roy slaps his hands away.

ROY
Crowley! I thought the wolves got you.

CROWLEY
Not all of me. They were fighting over a couple of my appendages and I escaped.

A FRENCHMAN passes, looking at them suspiciously. Crowley shoves them into the shadows of the alley.

CROWLEY
And you're on the lam.

Crowley indicates a POSTER tacked to the wall. It is a drawing of Roy as a French nobleman. It reads: ESCAPED! MARQUIS DE KNABLE. ENEMY OF THE PEOPLE!

CROWLEY
I've been scouting around. It's head chopping time in Paris--and you're #1 on the list. Look, you gotta let me help you.

HELEN
Why should you help us?

CROWLEY
I got a score to settle with Spike. You escape, he goes down. Waaay down.

166 INT. SPIKE'S CONTROL ROOM 166

The strain showing on him, Spike turns away from the on-line screen. He can't believe that the Knables have escaped again. The scoreboard shows the Knable's line has edged into the red zone... closing in on Redemption.

BIERCE
(aside, to Wetzel)
Personally, I think he's losing it. A pathetic thing to watch.

Suddenly, a four-foot square area on the floor LIGHTS UP. The square starts to RISE, HOT BURNING GASES escaping from under it. This elevator from the lower regions rises. Out of the POISONOUS GASES steps a CREATURE who was a man once--but now resembles a wax figure whose features have melted together.

BIERCE
What is it?

WETZEL
The price of failure.

The creature shuffles to Spike.

CREATURE
(distorted voice)
Don't you recognize me, Spike?

SPIKE
Can't place the face.

CREATURE
I used to have your job. You took it away.

SPIKE
Oh, yes. Silverstein. So how's retirement coming along? *

CREATURE
Sucks.
(hands over a message, secured by the Chairman's seal)
But soon you'll be finding that out for yourself.

SPIKE
(calmly opens and reads message, then:)
Tell the Chairman not to worry. I guarantee the Knables delivery. Soon.
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

166 CONTINUED: 166

SPIKE (cont'd)
(hands message back, dismissing him)
Now take your suppurating carcass back to where it belongs!

The creature shuffles back to elevator. It starts to sink into the floor.

CREATURE
See you real soon, Spike. Don't forget to dress lightly.
(laughs as he disappears below)

Spike turns to his personnel, cold determination in his eyes.

SPIKE
Mr. Wetzel, close ail conduits to other channels! Get moving!

Everyone scurries into action. Spike turns to the on-line screen where we see the Knables.

SPIKE
You will not escape me now.

167 EXT. PARIS STREET (TV WORLD) - NIGHT 167

A CLOCK ON A CLOCK TOWER shows 8:30 and CHIMES.

Crowley, Roy and Helen peek around the corner of the alley, one by one, heads on top of each other a la the Marx Brothers.

CROWLEY
Only two hours left and your 24 hours are up. All you gotta do is lie low and--

A SQUAD of REVOLUTIONARY GUARDSMEN march up the alley.

CROWLEY
Le cops! This way!

They follow Crowley across street to a tavern, "Chez Emtoisonneur."

CROWLEY
Quick! Hide in here while I look for the conduit outta here.

168 INT. ROY'S DEN - DAY 168

ON THE TV, the scene DISSOLVES TO a promo showing a still of Roy in his female garb. Supered is title "OFF WITH HIS HEAD."

ANNOUNCER (V.O.)
Stay tuned as the Marquis de Knable loses his head and his soul in the wicked farce "Off With His Head."

DIANE
Oh-oh.

169 INT. DARRYL'S ROOM - NIGHT 169

Darryl is feverishly installing the circuit board in his amp. Diane rushes in.

DIANE
We gotta jam.

Finishing, he flips on a switch. His system lights up.

170 INT. TAVERN (TV WORLD) - NIGHT 170

Lower-class, inhabited by a surly INNKEEPER, a few drunk PATRONS and a FIDDLER, who dozes next to his upturned hat.

Roy and Helen are in a corner-booth. The innkeeper brings a bottle of wine and glasses, eyes them suspiciously, exits scene.

ROY
(a stab at levity)
Well, we always wanted to go to Paris.

HELEN
In the twentieth century... not the French Revolution.

ROY
Well, we're here... we might as well make the best of it.

HELEN
You want to make the best of it? They are trying to kill you, in case you hadn't noticed.

ROY
I've noticed. I also noticed something else.
(Pause)
You left a lot of clues for me to find you, back there.

(CONTINUED)

170 CONTINUED 170

HELEN
So? *

ROY
So... I don't think you really want us to be through. * *

She looks up at him. *

HELEN
This isn't the time... and that's not really a proper outfit for a serious discussion. * * *

ROY
If we ever get out of here... things are going to be different. I promise. I'm not going to be just a watcher. I'm going to be the man I was when we first met. * * * * * *

She looks at him. *

HELEN
Your hair wasn't blond then, and you wore less makeup. * *

ROY
Wait here.

171 EXT. KNABLE BACK YARD - DUSK 171

A STORM is approaching. WIND is beginning to whip up. Diane is on the garage roof, positioning Darryl's crude TV transmitter.

DARRYL
Aim it at the center of the dish!

172 INT. TAVERN (TV WORLD) - NIGHT 172

Helen watches, curious, as Roy whispers something into the fiddler's ear. He returns to the table.

The fiddler stands, wobbly from drink, and begins playing--not expertly, but passably--a rendition of "And I Love Her" by the Beatles. Surprised, then enchanted, she looks at Roy.

ROY
I hummed it for him.

HELEN
That was our first slow dance.

(CONTINUED)

172 CONTINUED: 172

ROY
(holds his hand out to her)
This time I promise not to step all over you.

HELEN
Roy, no--

He pulls her into his arms forcefully.

HELEN
But, we're both--
(cups hands at breasts, indicating "women")

ROY
So? This is Gay Paree.

She smiles, giving in.

ROY
Person with the falsies leads.

They begin dancing... cautiously, as if on a first date. Then, as they dance, they grow closer and closer.

ROY
Remember our first date?

HELEN
Of course I remember. You took me to see "The Exorcist". I was terrified and you were very brave. *

ROY
Well, I never told you... I went to see it the night before... to get used to it... so I could impress you. *

She smiles at that. *

HELEN
It worked. *

She puts her head on his shoulder. They dance closely. *

ROY
You look so beautiful. *

HELEN
Thank you. *
(pause)
You look very pretty, too. *

They look at each other. They move to kiss when... *

(CONTINUED)

172 CONTINUED: (2) 172

... the door is thrown open with a CRASH. TWO REVOLUTIONARY GUARDS one fat, one handsome, swagger in. Helen and Roy see them and return t.o their booth as the fiddler stops playing.

The guards survey the room, spotting the two available women (Roy and Helen). Guard #1 nudges the other and they strut over.

ROY
(seeing them coming, sotto)
Oh great.

HANDSOME GUARD
You are both under arrest.

HELEN
What for?!

FAT GUARD
For being too beautiful, and without proper escort.

The guards laugh, sit at the table. Roy gets the handsome one.

HANDSOME GUARD
Garcon! More wine! *

Behind the counter, the innkeeper looks at ROY'S WANTED POSTER--and starts to put two and two together.

173 INT. DARRYL'S ROOM - NIGHT 173

Diane watches as Darryl works amid the tangled mass of cables and electronic equipment. He flips a few switches and the equipment alights, springing to life ...

... and on his TV screen we can see Roy and Helen in the tavern.

DARRYL
Good. My TV's hooked into the dish. Now we go for contact...
(hits the switch)

174 EXT. KNABLE BACKYARD - NIGHT 174

Darryl's garage roof transmitter emits a HIGH PITCHED HUM, transmitting broadcast waves directly at the satellite dish ...

175 INT. DARRYL'S ROOM - NIGHT 175

Darryl watches the TV screen for any sign of interference. But, the needle on the dial marked TRANSMISSION POWER barely moves.

ON THE SCREEN Roy and Helen are seen with the guards. Darryl taps the transmission power dial, the needle doesn't respond.

DARRYL
No interference. Nothing's getting through.
(turns off system, sinks back in his chair, thinking)
We need more power.

176 INT. TAVERN (TV WORLD) - NIGHT 176

The innkeeper sets down the wine and two more glasses. As he bends down he whispers in the handsome guard's ear.

INNKEEPER
This woman is not who you think. She's wanted by--

HANDSOME GUARD
(shoving him away)
Of course she's wanted, fool! By me.
(grabs Roy's hand)
Mon cheri, you inflame me.

The guard goes to kiss Roy's hand, Roy jerks it away.

ROY
I don't kiss on the first date.

HELEN
(rising abruptly)
Well it's been a kick, fellas. We're late for, uh, a hair appointment.

The fat guard grabs Helen and forces her back into her chair.

ROY
Hey--keep your hands off her!

HANDSOME GUARD
(to Roy)
Your hair is already beautiful.
(fingers Roy's hair)
May I have a lock of it--

Roy leans away and his wig comes off in the guard's hand.

(CONTINUED)

176 CONTINUED: 176

ROY
Uh, take the whole thing.

INNKEEPER
I tried to tell you! He's Marquis de Knable! Enemy of the people!

Roy tries to escape, but the guards leap to their feet, drawing their sabers, stopping him.

HANDSOME GUARD
I knew that.
(barks authoritatively)
Marquis de Knable, the guillotine awaits!
(beat, looks wistfully at Roy, still attracted to him)
I would've given you chocolates.

177 EXT. KNABLE BACKYARD - NIGHT 177

Darryl and Diane are at the fence next to the Sackler's. Darryl holds an extra-long power cord, ready for some guerilla action.

A couple of tools stick out from his back pockets.

DARRYL
I'm gonna cop some juice.

DIANE
Be careful.

He begins climbing over the fence.

178 EXT. SACKLER'S BACKYARD - NIGHT 178

Rivets, Sackler's huge, mean dog, is asleep, his head sticking outside his condo-size doghouse. Darryl silently drops into the yard, and begins creeping across the grass .... past the sleeping dog...to the power box at the back of the house.

179 EXT. PARIS STREET (TV WORLD) - NIGHT 179

A TUMBREL carrying Roy and a NOBLEMAN is wheeled along the street followed by a JEERING CROWD of PEASANTS. Helen runs alongside, trying to keep up. SOLDIERS march alongside.

PEASANT
Kill the Marquis! Kill the Marquis! *

ROY
I'm telling you, I'm not a marquis!

(CONTINUED)

179 CONTINUED: 179

The CROWD LAUGHS.

ROY (cont'd)
Okay, I wanted to be a big shot! When it didn't happen I hid from my failures! I forgot what's really important. My family! My wife! That's what I'm guilty of here!

The CROWD JEERS him.

ROY (cont'd)
And then I made a bum deal with the devil!

ANOTHER PEASANT
He's possessed by demons!

There are cries of BURN HIM! BURN HIM!

NOBLEMAN
I wouldn't talk like that. They'll burn you.

ROY
I thought I was being guillotined.

NOBLEMAN
First they guillotine you, then they burn you. That's much worse.

The tumbrel rounds a corner... and at the end of the street is... the GUILLOTINE!

180 EXT. SACKLER BACK YARD - NIGHT 180

Darryl has spliced the extension cord into Sackler's power box. Now to return to home base. He takes a step in that direction... and staring him in the face is the bloodshot, take-no-prisoners glare of Rivets. The dog GROWLS ...

181 INT. ROY'S DEN - NIGHT 181

On the TV, Diane sees her dad being wheeled to the guillotine.

DIANE
Hurry up, Darryl!

182 EXT. SACKLER BACK YARD - NIGHT 182

Darryl moves--ever so slowly--toward his yard. Rivets continues his low horrible growl ...

183 EXT. CLOCK TOWER (TV WORLD) - NIGHT 183

A clock on a tower near the guillotine reads: 10:28.

184 EXT. GUILLOTINE PLATFORM (TV WORLD) - NIGHT 184

The mob is now at the guillotine platform. Helen pushes through the crowd, finally getting to Roy.

HELEN
I love you.

The guards wrench Roy from her grasp and drag him up the platform stairs. Roy's hands are tied. The EXECUTIONER steps forward. *

EXECUTIONER
Any last requests?

ROY
The long version of "Stairway to Heaven."

EXECUTIONER
I'm afraid that's not where you're going.

The CROWD CHEERS and the guards move Roy toward the guillotine.

185 INT. ROY'S DEN - NIGHT 185

Diane sees this on TV. She runs out.

186 EXT. SACKLER BACKYARD - NIGHT 186

As Darryl slowly moves toward the fence we HEAR her scream:

DIANE (O.S.)
DARRYL!!!!!!!!!

Now he runs full out and the dog springs ...

187 EXT. KNABLE BACKYARD - NIGHT 187

... and we see Darryl's hands grip the top of the fence--we HEAR the dog SNARLING and BARKING. With Herculean effort, Darryl vaults himself over the fence, the end of the extension cord in hand. He coils the cord and tosses it up to Diane.

DARRYL
Catch!

188 EXT. GUILLOTINE PLATFORM (TV WORLD) - DAY 188

Roy's head is being forced into position under the blade.

ROY
AN INNOCENT MAN'S BLOOD IS BEING SPILLED!

EXECUTIONER
Good point.
(to crowd)
Better stand back. He may be a gusher.

Crowley pushes his way through the crowd to Helen.

CROWLEY
Looks like Spike's gonna make his quota after all. Sorry, Mrs. Knable.

189 INT. DARRYL'S ROOM - NIGHT 189

Darryl plugs the extension cord into a junction box amid the confusion of equipment--and rapidly sets all his switches.

190 EXT. GUILLOTINE PLATFORM (TV WORLD) - DAY 190

The Executioner walks to the blade release mechanism. Helen covers her eyes.

191 INT. SPIKE'S CONTROL CENTER 191

Spike watches on his huge on-line screen, supremely satisfied.

SPIKE
Finally he's mine.

192 EXT. GUILLOTINE PLATFORM (TV WORLD) - DAY 192

EXECUTIONER
By order of the court, I deliver the soul of Marquis de Knable to its rightful owner.

The executioner's hand reaches for the blade release ...

193 INT. DARRYL'S ROOM - NIGHT 193

Darryl activates the transmitter...

194 EXT. KNABLE BACKYARD - NIGHT 194

The GARAGE ROOF TRANSMITTER emits a VERY HIGH PITCHED SOUND.

195 INT. DARRYL'S ROOM - NIGHT 195

CLOSE ON the transmission power dial needle as it peaks and ...

196 EXT. GUILLOTINE PLATFORM (TV WORLD) - DAY 196

... a millisecond before the executioner pulls the blade release we hear Darryl's voice from the heavens!

DARRYL'S VOICE
Dad? Can you hear me?

The executioner freezes. The crowd looks to heavens, fearful.

ROY
Darryl! My God!

EXECUTIONER
God??

HELEN
(thinking fast, running up steps)
Yes! It's God!
(to the heavens)
Right, God? Tell them to release him.

197 INT. DARRYL'S ROOM - NIGHT 197

DIANE
Go ahead, tell 'em!

Affecting a deep voice, Darryl talks into his microphone, watching the action on his small monitor.

DARRYL
Release the Marquis!

198 EXT. GUILLOTINE PLATFORM (TV WORLD) - DAY 198

ROY
You heard Him! Get me out of this!

199 INT. SPIKE'S CONTROL CENTER 199

SPIKE
What--what is this! What's happening!
Who's messing with my programming!!!

200 INT. DARRYL'S ROOM - NIGHT 200

Darryl directs his order to the executioner.

DARRYL
You! The weenie in black!

201 EXT. GUILLOTINE PLATFORM (TV WORLD) - DAY 201

The executioner points to himself, questioningly

VOICE
Yeah, you. RELEASE HIM!!

The CROWD SCATTERS in fright and the executioner scurries to release Roy and undo his tied hands.

202 INT. DARRYL'S ROOM - NIGHT 202

DARRYL
(into microphone)
I am the voice of--

Darryl's equipment blows, SPARKING.

203 EXT. CLOCK TOWER (TV WORLD) - NIGHT 203

ONE CHIME SOUNDS as the clock reads: 10:30.

204 EXT. GUILLOTINE PLATFORM (TV WORLD) - DAY 204

Helen runs to the now freed Roy. They embrace and kiss passionately.

ROY
I'm never losing you again. *

Crowley joins in, dancing on one leg.

CROWLEY
We beat him! We beat Spike. Ha! Ha!

205 INT. SPIKE'S CONTROL CENTER 205

On the scoreboard, the Knable's line has reached the REDEMPTION SQUARE, which PULSATES IN RED.

SPIKE
(his world collapsing)
This isn't... possible ...

BIERCE
(with mock sympathy)
Sir, speaking for the staff, we'll all miss your kind words and inspiring leadership.

Spike leaps upon Bierce, getting a death grip on Bierce's throat. Ducker, the woman from contracts, pops in.

(CONTINUED)

205 CONTINUED: 205

DUCKER
Sorry to interrupt your performance review.

SPIKE
(on the floor, hands around Bierce's throat)
What do you want!!

DUCKER
As I suspected, there was a protest filed on the Knable case. A verbal contract binds only the parties personally making the agreement. Therefore, the contract can only be for one person--you took two.

SPIKE
So sue me!

DUCKER
I don't make the rules. Just doing my job.

SPIKE
(a nefarious glint suddenly appears in his eye--he's working an angle)
... yes.
(drops Bierce, grabs Ducker, kissing her)
You're the ugliest bitch in perdition, but you just gave me a beautiful idea.
(to the engineer)
Discharge Mister Knable.

WETZEL
But, sir--

SPIKE
The contract was for him only.

Wetzel's face breaks into a thin smile--he understands the loophole.

WETZEL
A masterful stroke, sir.

SPIKE
You heard me, discharge him!

The engineer pushes the FADE LEVER,

206 EXT. GUILLOTINE PLATFORM (TV WORLD) - NIGHT 206

Roy, Helen and Crowley are standing on the platform.

CROWLEY
I don't get it. They should've zapped you home by now.

Roy's image suddenly starts to FADE AWAY ...

HELEN
Roy!

...and he's GONE! Helen looks to Crowley, alarmed.

207 EXT. KNABLE BACKYARD - NIGHT 207

Roy's sparking image blasts out of the dish, sprawling on the grass, becoming solid. Wearing the peasant woman's outfit, he shakes his head, clearing it. The kids run out.

DARRYL & DIANE
Dad! Dad!

They help him up, hugging him, AD LIBBING excitedly.

ROY
(looking around)
Where's your mother?

208 INT. SPIKE'S CONTROL CENTER 208

Ducker, Wetzel and Bierce follow Spike to the on-line screen.

SPIKE
My obligation is limited to those I have a contract with. I fulfilled my end by discharging Mr. Knable.

BIERCE
But his wife--

SPIKE
Those who trespass into the system without permission--are on their own.

DUCKER
Perhaps we should get an authorization--

SPIKE
We'll sort out the bodies later. After I kill them both.

(CONTINUED)

208 CONTINUED: 208

WETZEL
But sir, how can you be sure he'll come back?

SPIKE
Because he suffers from that terminal castrating affliction.
(with supreme distaste)
Love.

He walks to the lighted circle on the floor, flicks his wrist and his remote snaps into his hand.

SPIKE (cont'd)
(cocks an eye to Bierce)
And I will return... in case anyone is feeling ambitious.
(punching his remote)
Time to rock and roll.

His IMAGE FADES and is sucked into the large screen.

209 EXT. GUILLOTINE PLATFORM (TV WORLD) - DAY 209

Spike materializes next to Helen and Crowley, startling them.

SPIKE
Crowley. Quite a radical weight-loss plan you've been on there.

Crowley swings his crutch at Spike's head. Spike easily ducks it and KICKS Crowley off the platform. He holds his hand out to Helen, who backs away.

SPIKE
Hello, Mrs. Knable. Mr. Spike, at your service.

HELEN
(backing away from him)
Where's my husband?

SPIKE
I'll take you to him.

Spike grabs her and activates his remote. THEIR IMAGES FADE.

CUT TO:

210 EXT. WESTERN HELLHOLE - DAY 210

(CONTINUED)

210 CONTINUED: 210

THE HUGE BLISTERING SUN

BUZZARDS circle across it. CAMERA moves down to ...

... Helen, wearing a frilly western dress, tied to the wooden spokes of a buckboard wagon wheel. As we PULL BACK we see that the buckboard, loaded with barrels, is parked across railroad tracks... and Helen is dead-center between the rails.

The railroad runs alongside a dusty, deserted hellhole of a town.

The style of this sequence is that of a SPAGHETTI WESTERN with flamboyant Ennio Morricone-style music. Camera work is exaggerated. Lots of extreme close-ups and zooms.

As Helen looks around, suddenly realizing where she is ...

...a dusty black cowboy boot walks into the shot. Helen looks up at the wearer, seeing ...

.... the black-clad Mr. Spike, looking like a very mean Lee Van Cleef. Unshaven, scraggly mustache, scar on his cheek. He clicks open his pocket watch, looks down the track that disappears into the heat waves of this flat, barren desert.

SPIKE
Howdy, ma'am. Reckon the three-ten to Yuma will be along any minute.

She looks down the tracks, her predicament dawning.

SPIKE
Funny thing though... it don't exactly... stop here.

The DISTANT WHISTLE of a steam engine is heard. Helen's head jerks to the sound, then back to Spike, now fully realizing his horrible intent.

HELEN
You've got to be joking. You're... going to hit me with a--a train?

SPIKE
What can I say? I'm a sucker for big endings.

HELEN
You're a sadistic monster!

(CONTINUED)

210 CONTINUED: (2) 210

SPIKE
Runs in the family. My father was president of an oil company.
(grins evilly)
Have a nice day, Miz Knable.

Spike's remote shoots into his hand. He presses it and disappears.

The DISTANT WHISTLE of a steam engine is heard again, closer.

HELEN
A train. He's going to hit me with a train.

211 INT. ROY'S DEN - NIGHT 211

Roy is rapidly scanning the channels to find Helen.

DIANE
Where is she?

212 VIDEO INSERT - SPIKE'S NEWSROOM 212

Suddenly a NEWS BULLETIN comes on the screen. Spike is the Newsman.

SPIKE (ON TV SCREEN)
This just in. Helen Knable has been kidnapped and taken to Channel One. We take you there live.

213 EXT. WESTERN HELLHOLE - DAY 213

The screen changes to show Helen tied to the wagon wheel.

HELEN (ON TV SCREEN)
Roy! I don't know where you are... but GET YOUR BUTT BACK HERE!

214 INT. SPIKE'S NEWSROOM 214

The screen cuts back to show Spike as the newsman.

SPIKE (ON TV)
Unfortunately, her gutless failure of a husband won't lift a finger to save her. Isn't that right, Roy?

215 INT. ROY'S DEN - NIGHT 215

ROY
No.

(CONTINUED)

215 CONTINUED: 215

Roy stands, a man of action. A doer. He shoves the remote controller into his front pocket and hitches up his belt.

ROY
I'm going in... and this time, I'm bringing my wife back.

216 EXT. WESTERN HELLHOLE (TV WORLD) - DAY 216

Struggling in vain to free herself, Helen turns and sees what is loaded in the wagon: barrels marked "DYNAMITE."

HELEN
Dynamite?? He's going to hit me with a train AND blow me up.
(beat, beat)
ROOOOOOYYYYYYY!

217 EXT. KNABLE BACKYARD - NIGHT 217

Roy hugs his kids.

DARRYL
Dad, be careful.

Roy looks at the dish, hiding his fear and doubt.

ROY
(with bravado)
You just have the donuts ready. I'll be hungry when we get back.

He presses "one" on the channel selector of his remote and walks toward the dish. A WIND kicks up, the WHITE LIGHT FREEZES HIS IMAGE, the dish sucks him in and ZAP he's gone.

218 EXT. WESTERN HELLHOLE (TV WORLD) - ON SALOON DOORS - DAY 218

Roy comes out of the saloon doors. One of the doors falls off its hinges, landing on Roy's foot. He winces in pain. His determined eyes flick left and right. He wears a "Man With No Name" hat and poncho. A cheroot pokes from between his teeth. He inhales on the cheroot and explodes in wracking coughs.

HELEN (O.S.)
Help!

He throws the foul cheroot away and runs off down the street, tripping over his long poncho, taking a header.

Roy runs to the end of the street and sees--through an alley between two buildings--Helen tied to the wagon on the railroad tracks. The SOUND OF THE APPROACHING TRAIN is getting louder.

(CONTINUED)

218 CONTINUED: 218

ROY
Helen!

HELEN
Roy!

Suddenly Spike steps into the alley between Roy and Helen. He faces Roy, thirty feet away.

SPIKE
Back to play the hero, eh? Heh-heh.
Not exactly type casting.
(hands cover over his six-guns)
Make your move, tinhorn.

Roy and Spike stare each other down.

And now we have a series of EXTREME CLOSE-UPS: Their eyes. Tongues licking dry lips. A bead of sweat rolling down Roy's cheek. Hands hovering over gun handles. A fly on Spike's cheek. Roy's nostril. All accompanied by florid MUSIC that builds and builds and builds until it abruptly halts on Helen's close up.

HELEN
Today, Roy.

Roy goes for his gun, but the clumsy poncho is in the way. He finally shoves the poncho aside, grabs the gun--and as he's bringing it up, Spike fires BLAM! hitting Roy in the chest. Roy falls back in the dirt, lifeless.

HELEN
No!

219 INT. ROY'S DEN - NIGHT 219

The kids watching this:

DARRYL & DIANE
Dad!

220 EXT. WESTERN HELLHOLE (TV WORLD) - DAY 220

Gunfighter style, Spike twirls his gun and slips it back in his holster. Spurs jangling, he coolly walks to the lifeless Roy. He moves Roy's poncho aside and sees that the shirt pocket has been shot through. He reaches into the pocket and retrieves Roy's remote controller ...

... but when he brings it out we see it has been shot. Sparking, severed wires protrude from its smoking body.

(CONTINUED)

220 CONTINUED: 220

And just as Spike looks back to Roy, Roy's fist catches him square in the jaw with a tremendous punch, knocking him back, Roy's remote flying from his grasp.

ROY
Ya missed me, pardner.

Roy jumps on Spike, they wrestle in the dirt. They roll over Roy's remote--there's a BURST OF TV SNOW and--

221 EXT. GLADIATOR ARENA (TV WORLD) - DAY 221

--they continue wrestling on the ground, only now Spike is a Roman gladiator and Roy is a bedraggled Christian. Spike throws Roy off him and grabs a spiked mace from the ground.

SPIKE
Our remotes are synchronized, Roy-boy. Where you go, I go.

Spike swings his mace and Roy ducks. We hear the CROWD ROAR. Roy picks up a shield to protect himself. Spike advances, furiously swinging the mace, battering Roy back.

222 INT. ROY'S DEN - NIGHT 222

The kids are watching Roy's channel.

DIANE
I can't watch. Switch to mom! Switch to mom!

Darryl switches to channel one and we see Helen tied to the wagon wheel, straining to loosen her bonds. She looks down the tracks and sees ...

... the train, tiny in the distance, but growing bigger and bigger as it hurtles inexorably forward on its death mission.

The kids exchange frightened looks.

DARRYL
Dad'll save her. I know he will.

223 EXT. GLADIATOR ARENA (TV WORLD) - DAY 223

Roy is getting the crap beat out of him by Spike. He's battered back against the arena's boards. Roy presses his remote to change the channel. It sparks, nothing happens.

Spike steps back, raises his mace and charges at Roy. Roy presses the remote again, it sparks--we see a BURST OF TV SNOW and--

224 INT. HOCKEY RINK (TV WORLD) 224

--Spike crushes Roy into the boards with a hard check. They are dressed as opposing hockey players. Roy's remote drops to the ice and they battle for it as if it were the puck.

TWO REFEREES skate through the frame, fighting each other. Spike and Roy do a double take at this ...

... then Spike elbows Roy in the face, slashes him with his stick. He gets control of Roy's remote and skates around the goal from the right side.

Roy, wobbly on skates, pursues. He skates around the goal coming the opposite direction. Roy wobbles, falls on his butt... and sliding full tilt, he and Spike collide, the remote between them. There's a BURST OF TV SNOW and--

225 INT. SPEEDING CAR (TV WORLD) - DAY 225

--Roy suddenly finds himself at the steering wheel of a speeding car.

226 INT. ANOTHER SPEEDING CAR (TV WORLD) - DAY 226

Spike is at the wheel of another speeding car.

227 EXT. SALT FLATS (TV WORLD) - DAY 227

CLOSE UP of a TV COMMERCIAL PITCHMAN in a white coat, a John Cameron Swayze type, holding two watches to camera.

PITCHMAN
We strapped Slimex watches to the front bumpers of two speeding cars. Let's see what happens when they crash head on!

228 INT. ROY'S SPEEDING CAR (TV WORLD) - DAY 228

Roy's eyes pop as he sees Spike's car racing toward him. He tries to turn the wheel, but it's I-ocked in place.

229 INT. SPIKE'S SPEEDING CAR (TV WORLD) - DAY 229

Likewise, Spike's eyes pop as he sees Roy's car coming at him. Spike tries to turn the wheel, but it won't budge. The door is locked, too.

SPIKE
This isn't right!

Spike goes for his remote--and in his panic, it shoots out of its holster to the car floor.

230 INT. ROY'S SPEEDING CAR (TV WORLD) - DAY 230

Roy frantically hits the channel changer on his remote, nothing happening.

231 INT. SPIKE'S SPEEDING CAR (TV WORLD) - DAY 231

Spike dives for his remote on the car floor, jabs the channel changer, there's a BURST OF TV SNOW and--

232 INT. LOOKING OUT ROY'S WINDSHIELD (TV WORLD) - DAY 232

--the car that was coming at him is now a Nazi Messerschmitt fighter! It pulls up at the last microsecond, zooming right over Roy who suddenly sees ...

... that he's in the cockpit of a P-51!

ROY
Oh terrific!

He finds his remote in the pocket of his flak jacket and tries to rejoin the protruding wires.

ROY
Don't worry, Helen, don't worry. I'm coming back! If I could get this damned thing to work!

233 EXT. WESTERN HELLHOLE (TV WORLD) - DAY 233

The train now looms closer, its WHISTLE BLASTING. Logo on the side of the train reads "DamnTrak."

234 INT. P-51 COCKPIT (TV WORLD) - DAY 234

Spike's voice comes over Roy's radio.

SPIKE'S VOICE (filtered)
(German accent)
American flyboy wuss. I have you in my sigh-ights.

Roy frantically searches the skies.

SPIKE'S VOICE (filtered)
Coming at you at three o'clock... no, make zat three fifteen... actually now half-past four. Zero hour for you, schweinhund!

235 EXT. MESSERSCHMITT 235

Spike at the controls, it dives, spitting a BURST OF MACHINE GUN FIRE at ...

236 ROY'S P-51 - EXT. DAY 236

Bullets rake across Roy's plane. Belching smoke, it dives.

237 INT. ROY'S P-51 - DAY 237

Black, acrid smoke pours into the cockpit. Coughing,-Roy tries to open the canopy but it's jammed. He madly presses his remote, but it just sparks.

ROY
WORK, DAMNIT! WORK!
(bangs the remote on the wheel)
YOU SON OF A--

There's a BURST OF TV SNOW and--

238 ROY 238

falls through the air, without the airplane around him and--

ROY
BIIIIIIIIIITCHHHHHHHH ...

239 INT. CASTLE MAIN HALL (TV WORLD) - NIGHT 239

--crashes through a tall stained-glass window, landing with a thud on a banquet table. He's wearing the same clothes that Errol Flynn wore in the movie we saw in the opening sequence. He stirs, shaking his groggy head. He pulls his remote from under him. It's utterly smashed, useless.

SPIKE (O.S.)
Tsk, tsk, tsk.

Spike stands there, dressed in black, his hair slicked back, looking very much like the grinning, evil Basil Rathbone.

SPIKE
Now you'll never get back to Kansas. En garde.

Roy looks down, he's not wearing a sword.

SPIKE (cont'd)
No sword? Have to talk to that prop man.

240 INT. ROY'S DEN - NIGHT 240

Darryl and Diane, watching the action.

DIANE
You said what goes into the dish ends up in there, right?

240 CONTINUED: 240

DARRYL
Right.

Their eyes go to Roy's crossed foils hanging on the wall.

241 EXT. WESTERN HELLHOLE (TV WORLD) - DAY 241

The 80-ton steam monster races ever onward toward Helen.

242 INT. CASTLE (TV WORLD) - NIGHT 242

Sword circling, Spike advances on Roy, toying with him.

SPIKE
I imagine that right about now... your wife is catching that train. Right between the eyes. Heh-heh-heh.

Spike flicks his sword at Roy's arm, drawing blood.

SPIKE (cont'd)
And you let it happen.

He flicks his sword at Roy's other arm, drawing blood.

243 EXT. KNABLE BACKYARD - NIGHT 243

Darryl gets set to toss Roy's foil in.

DARRYL
Dad! Here it comes!

He throws the sword into the center of the dish, where it disappears in a flash of light.

244 INT. CASTLE (TV WORLD) - NIGHT 244

Roy is pinned against a stone staircase.

SPIKE
I've taken loads of souls... but none more pathetic that yours, Roy.

245 EXT. CLOUDS (TV WORLD) - NIGHT 245

Roy's sword shoots down out of the clouds to THUNDER and LIGHTNING, rocketing down handle-end first.

246 INT. CASTLE (TV WORLD) - NIGHT 246

Spike's foil is pressed into Roy's neck.

SPIKE
Say goodnight, Gracie.

The sword streaks through the broken window. Roy's arm rises to meet it -- and when he grabs it, when his hand meets the hilt -- a magical BLUE ELECTRICAL CHARGE courses into his arm and the STIRRING MUSIC from the Errol Flynn movie begins.

Roy parries Spike's sword away, jumping down from the staircase, charged with renewed confidence.

ROY
Not yet. You see, I was captain of my junior college fencing team.
(whipping the sword around)
Prepare to taste Corsican steel!

And what follows is the greatest sword fight ever filmed.

Roy leaps at Spike, sword flashing. Spike backpedals, trading vicious swipes with Roy. Roy slices Spike's sleeve. And now, charged with emotion, Roy fights harder, forcing Spike backwards up the stairs.

Trapped, Spike leaps off the stairs onto a chandelier and swings over onto a table where the fight continues.

From the floor, Roy slashes Spike's legs. Spike jumps--once--twice. Then with Roy off balance, Spike leaps to the floor and, with a quick series of swipes, backs Roy into a corner near a suit of armor.

Spike lunges and Roy catches the hilt of his sword with his. They're face to face, straining with all their might.

SPIKE
I gave you escape from your pitiful life!

ROY
I want it back!

SPIKE
All sales are final!

ROY
Not this one!

Roy heaves Spike away and advances on him, his sword lightning quick. Spike retreats, tiring, falling over a chair.

(CONTINUED)

246 CONTINUED: 246

Finally, in one swift maneuver, Roy sweeps Spike's sword away. He pins Spike to the floor with his sword.

ROY
Give me your remote!

SPIKE
Sure, hey, anything. No problem.

The remote shoots into Spike's hand. He tries to press the channel changer, but Roy pins his hand, taking the remote.

SPIKE
(without his remote, he's a whimpering child)
Don't leave me here! I'm not a bad guy. I was a network Vice President. *

ROY
You're the one who's pathetic.

SPIKE
The original idea for Mr. Ed--that was mine. They stole it from me! I got drunk, crashed on Mulholland--next thing I know I got this job.

Roy punches in Channel One on the remote. His IMAGE FADES ...

SPIKE
No! Don't leave me here! Come back!

...and Roy DISAPPEARS and--

247 EXT. WESTERN HELLHOLE (TV WORLD) - DAY 247

--MATERIALIZES at the spot where he and Spike zapped out. The TRAIN WHISTLE BLASTS, the train now very close. He charges off full tilt.

The train thunders toward Helen. It's almost on top of her when she sees Roy.

HELEN
Roy!

248 INT. SPIKE'S CONTROL ROOM 248

Wetzel and Bierce are watching ...

WETZEL
(to engineer)
Deactivate escape frequencies.

(CONTINUED)

248 CONTINUED: 248

BIERCE
What are you doing?

WETZEL
(very pleased with himself)
I've trapped them.

249 EXT. WESTERN HELLHOLE (TV WORLD) - DAY 249

Roy reaches Helen, grabs her and hits the channel changer on the remote. But nothing happens.

ROY
It's not working!

250 INT. SPIKE'S CONTROL ROOM 250

BIERCE
Let them go.

Wetzel watches with perverse joy, not listening to Bierce.

251 INT. ROY'S DEN - NIGHT 251

Darryl and Diane watch, terrified. Darryl closes his eyes and with all his might, chants a message to his parents.

DARRYL
... turn it off... turn it OFF...

252 EXT. WESTERN HELLHOLE (TV WORLD) - DAY 252

Seconds to impact.

HELEN
(registering the message)
Roy! How do you make TV go away?! You turn it--

ROY & HELEN
OFF!

He grabs her, presses the OFF button just as--

--a WIDE SHOT shows the train obliterating the wagon full of dynamite, EXPLODING.

253 EXT. KNABLE BACKYARD - NIGHT 253

The kids race out... but the dish is silent. The kids exchange terrified looks.

(CONTINUED)

253 CONTINUED: 253

Then the dish starts to vibrate... and suddenly with the EXPLOSIVE FORCE of a SONIC BOOM, Roy, Helen and parts of the wagon wheel Helen was tied to are blasted out of the dish.

Darryl and Diane run to their parents and hug them.

254 INT. SPIKE'S CONTROL ROOM 254

WETZEL
(dumbfounded)
We lost them!

Bierce smiles to himself, happy they got away.

255 EXT. KNABLE BACKYARD - NIGHT 255

Roy and Helen get to their feet, dazed, looking around.

HELEN
Roy, we're home.

There is a FLASH and a smaller SONIC BOOM--and something shoots out of the dish, hitting Roy like a BB.

ROY
Ow! What hit me?

They look down and see Helen's wedding ring on the grass.

HELEN
(picking it up)
My ring.

Roy slips it on her finger.

ROY
This time, you're never taking it off.

They kiss. Everyone's happy... until they HEAR a FAMILIAR GROWL. They turn and see ...

... Rivets, snarling at them.

ROY
Whoever left the gate open is grounded for a week.

Rivets charges, leaps--the dog flies in front of the dish. A FLASH OF LIGHT. The dog's IMAGE is whooshed into the dish, gone.

(CONTINUED)

255 CONTINUED: 255

ROY
Check that. Whoever left the gate open gets double their allowance.

DARRYL
(pointing o.s. at the dish)
Look!

The dish is imploding, sinking into the ground, going back to where it came. In a few moments... it is gone.

The family sighs in relief. Finally, it's over.

256 INT. CASTLE (TV WORLD) - NIGHT 256

Spike hangs from the chandelier. Rivets is below, viciously snapping and barking at him.

SPIKE (ON TV)
Bierce, Wetzel! Get me out of here! Do you hear me! Get me out!

Suddenly a suit of armor animates, raising its visor--and we see Crowley is inside.

CROWLEY
Hello, Spike.

SPIKE
(oozing sincerity)
Crowley! Just in time. I know we've had some minor differences, heh-heh. But how 'bout helping out an old friend here?

CROWLEY
Sure.
(as Jack Nicholson)
Heeere's Spike-eeeeee

Crowley takes a battle axe and chops the rope holding up the chandelier. The last we see of Spike is him plummeting toward Rivets, SCREAMING in terror.

257 INT. SPIKE'S CONTROL ROOM 257

Bierce and Wetzel watch the screen o.s. We hear SPIKE SCREAMING as Rivets tears into him. Using a remote, Bierce turns off the screen.

BIERCE
I get his parking space.

DISSOLVE TO:

258 EXT. STORE SIGN - DAY 258

It reads: "KNABLE FENCING ACADEMY"

Widen to reveal a store front in an outdoor mall. Painted on the front window is: "Autumn Classes Starting. Enroll now."

259 INT. KNABLE FENCING ACADEMY - DAY 259

Roy, in fencing outfit and mask, fencing rudimentarily with a TEN-YEAR-OLD GIRL. Other KIDS stand against a wall, watching.

ROY
Very good, Laura. Okay, who's next? Joey, show us your stuff.

JOEY walks out. Facing Roy, he assumes the position, then begins a furious attack. Momentarily taken aback, Roy parries... Joey lunges. Roy easily sidesteps the kid's thrust and the kid falls on his face on the mat. Roy pulls off his mask.

ROY
Who on earth taught you <u>that</u>?

JOEY
I saw it on TV. Some old movie.

ROY
Take my advice, kid. Don't watch too much TV. It can get you into trouble.
(to class)
Okay, fencers. Class dismissed.

As the kids file out, we HOLD on Roy, who tries to duplicate the moves the kid just put on him.

260 EXT. KNABLE BACK YARD - DUSK 260

Roy dumps charcoal brickettes into the barbecue. Darryl helps Helen set the picnic table for dinner. Darryl bounds out the back door, all dressed up for a night of "boy shopping" at the mall.

DIANE
I'm outta here. Be back around ten.

ROY
Hold on little lady. You know what night it is.

Diane groans.

ROY/HELEN/DARRYL
Family night!

(CONTINUED)

260 CONTINUED: 260

Her hopes dashed, Diane slumps down in a chair.

ROY
The one weeknight we all agreed to spend quality time together.
(looks around)
Starter fluid...

261 INT. GARAGE - DUSK 261

Roy opens the side door and finds the starter fluid. He turns to leave when he hears the spooky, faraway SOUNDS of a TV playing snippets of shows and commercials. He freezes and looks to ...

... the TV, covered by a sheet, stored away in the dark recesses of the garage. It's not on, it's not even plugged in... but then where are those sounds coming from?

Roy stares at it, entranced. The seductive TV sounds become a siren-call, drawing him toward the set ...

HELEN (O.S.)
Roy! We're getting hungry!

Roy immediately snaps out of it. The TV sounds stop.

ROY
Coming, honey!

He goes to the door. Stops. The TV sounds start again. He fights the urge to turn and look back at the TV. But then he realizes ...

ROY
Hey... I got a <u>life</u> now.

And with that, he smiles and exits, slamming the door on temptation. For now.

<u>THE END</u>